'Weather 101' with Al Kaprielian
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THE VALLEY PATRIOT

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RIVERA CALLED "OREO COOKIE"

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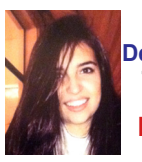

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NEWS FROM THE AMERICAN LEGION: YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE

John Lenotte
VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

At the American Legion National Convention held in Baltimore, MD in early September, Dale Barnett of Georgia was elected and installed as National Commander. His motto is: Duty, Honor, Country. This embodies the principles of the American Legion since it's founding in 1919. At that convention, Frank MacDonald was installed as National Executive Committeeman and William Chisholm as Alternate National Executive Committeeman from Massachusetts. Both will do an outstanding job in representing us.

One of the many exciting moments from that convention was the Legacy Run Donation. This is a fund that The American Legion set up to provide scholarships for the children of those military service members who died on active duty since 9/11. Each year the Legion Riders set a new record in fundraising. This year the total was $1,249, 684.13, an incredible amount. Here in Massachusetts, there are a number of Legion Rider Chapters who raise funds throughout the year. I hope you will consider donating to this worthy cause. And 100% of donations are given to the charity!

Fall seems to move quickly along into winter. Let us not forget that in November, there are many cities and towns that conduct local elections. Each and every vote counts. Traditionally, there is a very low turnout of voters in a year where there is no presidential election. Yes, the media is full on reports on the various candidates running for President. But do not let that turn your attention from your local elected officials. If you are happy with them, then they deserve your vote so they can remain in office. On the other side of the proverbial coin, if you are not happy with the incumbent(s) then you should look at who else is running for that office and consider voting for the challenger. If you do not vote, then you have no real basis for complaint. I know I will be voting in November, I hope you will also show up at the voting booth.

After the local elections, I know I will start to take a serious look at the candidates for President. Personally, I do not pay much attention to the ads. I consider the ads to be a lot of hype and often hold half-truths. The amount of money spent on advertising I think is outrageous. The dollars could be cut dramatically and put to good use helping those in need here in this country. Like many others I am looking for some action out of our elected officials. Enough with the blame game, there is plenty to go around.

One source that I use is Vote Smart, www.votesmart.org. This site will give you information on both national and state individuals. You can view their biography, how they have voted on legislation, their positions on issues and major contributors. And the site is very easy to use. There are other sites on the web; you can get a lot of information, but you have to look for it. Be a concerned citizen. Be an educated voter.

VOTE IN NOVEMBER!

John Lenotte, Commander – Wilbur M. Comeau Post 4, The American Legion, Haverhill MA; Past Commander – Department of MA. Contact: JohnLDistrict8@verizon.net

John Lenotte is the recipient of the 2012 Valley Patriot Hero of the Year Award and is Commander of the Wilbur M. Comeau Post 4, Haverhill, MA; Past Department Commander, of Massachusetts The American Legion; contact: JohnLDistrict8@verizon.net

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See Something, Say Something, Unless….

Jeff Katz
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

"It is clear Ahmed's teachers failed him" said White House Press Secretary Josh Ernest when he was questioned about a fourteen year old student in Irving, Texas. No, Mister Spokesflack the failure here came on the part of those who thought the real story would never be revealed.

There's little question that Ahmed Mohamed seems to be a bright kid, known to many in his former middle school as something of a science geek. So it should not have raised any warning flags that Ahmed built a device of some sort and entered in to the school science fair. Nobody would have thought twice if Ahmed demonstrated how science could help cure a disease or unite people in their pursuit of knowledge. The problem, of course, is that Ahmed's story does not really involve any of those aspects. No science fair. No positive actions. Oh, and for the record Ahmed was actually a freshman in his new high school when he brought his device to school. Just three weeks in to the school year so it is rather unlikely that any of the teachers had come to pass judgment on his scientific acumen and prowess.

One day, Ahmed simply decided to bring a home built device to Macarthur High School. He claimed that he had invented a clock, but what he had actually done, according to engineers who viewed it, was to smash open a clock and rearrange its parts inside of a small suitcase. He placed this device in to his backpack and showed up at school. No science fair entry this, it was simply a matter of show and tell which is a little unusual for a teenager. Ahmed carried this device around in his backpack for a number of class periods until it began to beep during one class. The teacher in that class asked what it was and Ahmed opened up the backpack to reveal what looked, to most, like a suitcase bomb complete with a digital readout counting backwards.

The teacher was concerned it might have been a bomb and rightly so. Ahmed was sent to the principal's office where he was questioned by local police officers. Those officers indicated that Ahmed never gave a complete answer and, in fact, according to them he was passive aggressive when he did answer. Not surprisingly, Ahmed and his device were removed from the school and that's where this gets all the more interesting.

Ahmed's father who seems to be find "Islamophobia" everywhere when he's not busy running for President of his native Sudan enlisted the help of C.A.I.R. which is also known as an unindicted co-conspirator in the Holy Land terrorism trial and together they launched an extensive media campaign designed to convince people that young Ahmed was the victim of some sort of anti-Muslim bigotry.

This all sounds a lot like C.A.I.R.'s actions back in 2006 when it tried to convince people that six Muslim men on a U.S. Airways flight were the victims of anti-Muslim bigotry when they were removed from a flight because their behavior onboard alarmed passengers and crew members. The so-called "Flying Imams"

AHMED: PAGE 19

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"WEATHER 101" WITH AL!

Tracking Hurricane Joaquin

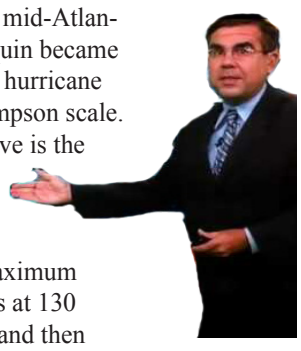
Al Kaprielian
VALLEY PATRIOT WEATHERMAN

Our warm weather of September is now just a memory. Boston saw its first heat wave in September since 1983. A heat wave is defined as three or more consecutive days when the temperature reaches 90 degrees or higher. An upper level ridge of HIGH PRESSURE was responsible for the hot and dry days we saw in September. As October began, the upper level ridge weakened and moved farther into the Atlantic Ocean.

A cold front brought heavy rain for the last day of September. This heavy rain caused major flooding on area roadways with some cars stuck in flood waters. The cold front was not only responsible for the heavy rain but brought an end to our warm and humid weather.

Next, our attention was focused on Hurricane Joaquin which battered the Bahamas with heavy rain and strong winds.

It first looked like Joaquin would make landfall on the east coast around North Carolina or the mid-Atlantic region. Joaquin became a category four hurricane on the saffir-simpson scale.



A category five is the highest and worst case hurricane. Joaquin had maximum sustained winds at 130 miles per hour and then weakened slightly to 125 miles per hour as the hurricane moved over San Salvador in the Bahamas.

Later on Friday October 2nd, Joaquin started to make the turn to the northeast which would take the hurricane away from the Bahamas and the US.

On Saturday October 3rd, hurricane Joaquin started to regain power and by noon on Saturday maximum sustained winds had reached 155 miles per hour, which is a strong category four hurricane.

Fortunately, Joaquin is moving away from the US. The next target for the hurricane is Bermuda which looks to be impacted on Sunday, October 4. The very warm ocean waters off the Bahamas caused Joaquin to strengthen into a category three and four hurricane. Hurricanes get their energy from very warm ocean waters that are over 80 degrees.

By Thursday October 1st, we started to see the majority of our computer models shift Joaquin farther east offshore. This eastward shift in the track, spared the east coast of a devastating hit.

Why did the majority of the computer models shift the hurricane farther east?

There are a couple of reasons. First, it looked like an upper level low pressure system over the southeast US would capture Joaquin and cause it to hook west and into North Carolina or the Mid-Atlantic region. In the end, the upper level low pressure never captured Joaquin.

Why?

One reason is that the distance between the upper level low and Joaquin was too large for the upper low to capture the hurricane. Also there was another low pressure air mass ocer the Atlantic Ocean. It seemed like this low pressure air moved above Joaquin and the counterclockwise circulation around this low pressure air cause Joaquin to be steered to the northeast. As a result of this, the track was shifted more east and offshore of the US east coast.

The European model (ECMWF) is one of our better computer models. This model was consistent all along from one run to the next, in taking Joaquin more eastward and out to sea. The majority of the other computer models were showing the hurricane tracking into North Carolina and the mid-Atlantic region. By Thursday, October 1st, most (not all) of the other computer models started agreeing with the European model. The European model was the first computer model that brought hurricane Sandy up the east coast form the tropics. Hurricane sandy moved into New Jersey and caused a lot of damage and destruction. Luckily this time New Jersey and the east coast was spared from a major hurricane. The differences in the computer models as to the track of

JOAQUIN: PAGE 14

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Primaries: The Best and Worst of Times

Oscar Camargo
VALLEY PATRIOT N. ANDOVER COLUMNIST

We all know it's coming. The cooling temperatures, diminishing daylight hours, and the decaying leaves are all indicators of it. You'd be forgiven to think it was winter, but it's not—it's primary season.

We've all had a little taste thus far. Commercials. Mailers. Debates. If you're in New Hampshire, you're already feeling the brunt of this force of nature, human nature that is. But before you become cynical about what you're witnessing think about it in a greater context.

Whether you're a Democrat, Republican, or Independent, you've got to understand what's at stake here. It's your family's future, your community's future, your future that's at stake. This entire season may seem unflattering, even unbearable, but it's necessary. It's been said that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. I think a contentious primary season is a small price to pay.

If you believe that Donald Trump is your candidate, vote for him. If you think

Bernie Sanders will save our country, vote for him. If you think a Jeb or Hillary is what we're in need of, vote for either of them! Just don't let cynicism creep into your soul.

I'm not advocating for any candidate, but I am advocating for your active participation in the election process. In the end, these primaries were developed for a single reason: to take the power of nominating a candidate from party leaders to the people. If you're not empowered by shaping the destiny of our—your—future then watch as others mold it for you.

Oscar Camargo is a veteran and former candidate for State Representative. Follow him on Facebook at facebook.com/oscar.camargo or Twitter at @followcamargo

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THE CENTER AT PUNCHARD

BoomerVenture Turns Fall Inside Out

'Tis the season for connecting mind, body, and spirit when the BoomerVenture Campus convenes this fall. Feeling good, staying fit, both on the inside and out is what it's all about for the coming year. From aerobics, weight training and belly dancing to the reflection required to preserve your own living legacy and the spirituality of organizing, there's something to help everyone get more out of life and feel better doing it.

Most of the Campus activities fall under either the mind, body, or spirit category. But some span two or even three. Living Legacy, a journey to discover and create a personal living legacy, using a variety of media, is a program that engages and inspires on multiple levels. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Andover Cultural Council, which is supported by the MA Cultural Council, for which we are grateful.

Seven years ago, BoomerVenture was introduced as a way to engage a rising audience of baby-boomers intent on continuing to live life on their terms - healthy, active, and engaged. Today, that audience has risen and become the heart of the Center at Punchard's burgeoning community. Continually pushing the boundaries, the Center is committed to helping boomer participants find new ways to enhance wellness, broaden horizons and take advantage of a time for doing things long put aside or only imagined.

Fall 2015 is the most ambitious BoomerVenture season yet, with a diversity of program offerings designed to meet the needs of the broadest possible range of Andover's 50+ residents. And if there is something constituents want to try, the Center is always open to new and creative ideas. As the Center's new tagline says, it's a place where everyone is "growing together."

The BoomerVenture Campus Fall 2015 program schedule includes:

Reflexology with Uli Kapp: Thursday evenings starting at 6pm by advance appointment only. $1 per minute, in 15-minute intervals.

Living Legacy: How do you want to be remembered? Thursday, October 8 & 15 from 6:30-8pm. $20. Treasures of our memories, values, stories, insights and special wisdom are things of real value we can leave the generations yet to come. Join Dr. Susan H. Smith on a journey to discover and create your 'living legacy,' by using a variety of media. Bring your photos, your memories and your hopes for the future generation to this intimate, interactive workshop. Class size is limited – pre-registration only.

The Spirituality of Organizing: Thursday October 22 & 29. 6:45-8:15pm. $20. Once you begin the journey to de-clutter, clean out and organize your life, you begin to discover there is much more to organizing than just getting rid of physical things around you. Learn the techniques to internally organize and prepare yourself for the next steps on your path. Diana Noble of Noble Balance and Susan Walko, professional organizer and lecturer, will lead.

Everyday Mindfulness with Chip Carter:

Thursday at 6:30pm. $5 each. November 5: Mindfulness & Conversation: Learn to listen deeply to friends, loved ones and new acquaintances. See how mindfulness can improve the quality of your conversations. Learn how to have a "good" argument.

November 12: Mindfulness and Exercise. Mental hurdles can diminish and even prevent the intrinsic leisure of exercise and often prevents us from doing it! Learn mindfulness to get you there for the

PUNCHARD: PAGE 19

Free Veterinarian Care For Your Pets

Tracey Zysk
VALLEY PATRIOT DOGGIE COLUMNIST

On the morning of August 15, 2015 Catlyn Wright woke up to a sick baby. Not one of her human children, but her fur baby. Dozer, her 6yr old, 142 lb Laberdane was whimpering. In fact, Dozer was more than wimpering, he was in serious pain. No mother ever wants to see her child sick. Human or animal, your baby is your baby.

Catlyn, a working class, paycheck-to-paycheck mom, knew Dozer needed medical attention, but also understood that it may be quite costly. She had adopted Dozer over four years ago and he had previously been diagnosed with a rare medical condition affecting his joints. Knowing prior visits to the vets had left Catlyn financially strapped, she knew this visit would be quite costly. But she also wasn't going to withhold the medical attention her dog so desperately needed.

First the obvious, she contacted her existing vet in the New Bedford area. Unfortunately, this particular hospital had closed unexpectedly. Catlyn, realized at this point not only did she need to get her dog to a different vet, but she also wouldn't have access to Dozer's previous medical records. A little nervous that a new veterinarian would want to run a series of repetitive tests that Dozer had already had,

Catlyn once again was concerned about the cost.

Catlyn, started her internet search for a veterinarian, when the unthinkable happened. As Catlyn said, "An angel was with me, I couldn't believe what the search pulled up." One of the first veterinarian hospitals to be listed on her screen was "Merwin Memorial Free Clinic for Animals." Catlyn, literally starring at her computer couldn't believe what she was reading. She immediately went to their website and realized her prayers were answered.

Merwin Memorial Free Clinic for Animals provides free office visits and free outpatient veterinary services. These can include routine physical examinations, nail cutting and recommendations for how people can best care for their animals. Medicines to cure sick animals, (e.g. antibiotics) and preventative medicines, (e.g. heartworm pills and vaccines) are available at reduced rates.

Catlyn, her grandmother, and dog made the trip up to Allston, MA from New Bedford. This was over an hour commute, but one that Catlyn was determined and needed to do. She was going to be able to get Dozer, her love, the medical attention he needed.

At Merwin, they do not accept appointments. Because of the demand for their services, they are a first come first serve location. It is recommended you get there early, a little hint, an hour before they open. They can only accept a certain amount of animals a day, and may have to stop accepting clients into the waiting line once the line gets too long. Please visit their website for hours at www.merwin-clinic.org

Merwins Mission:

"No animal should have to suffer pain because its owner is financially unable to provide the medical help it sorely needs." -Harriet G. Bird, Founder.

Merwin accepts donations for their payments. It is suggested a minimum of $20, and they also provide medications at a discounted rate. Please remember if you can afford a little more than the $20, please donate appropriately. It would be greatly appreciated as this is a nonprofit and the veterinarians are donating their time and medical supplies to help care for our animals.

For Catlyn, she couldn't have been more grateful to Merwin Memorial. Dozer received a complete examination and the medications he so desperately needed. Today, Dozer is feeling much better and is enjoying his life pain free with his family.

Tracey Zysk, owner of Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care in North Andover MA is a local pet care professional. She has been featured on local radio, TV and newspapers educating the general public on animal care and animal health & wellness. Tracey is a proud supporter of Police, Fire & Military K9 units and National Award winner of the Platinum PAW award. Tracey may be reached at wigglewalk@comcast.net. Become a fan on Facebook at Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care

ADAM RETURNS TO PROSPECT HILL!

After a year off as the lead singer of the band Prospect Hill, Adam Fithian and the band are back together ... sort of. Fithian was thrown out as lead singer last year when the band announced that bassist Edgar Trancoso would become the new front man.

Fithian returns to the band for his first public performance since the breakup, when Prospect Hill appears at the Mill City Ballroom (74 Merrimack St.) in Lowell on October 17th at 8AM.

The Valley Patriot caught up with Fithian last week and asked him what it was like to come back after the way things were left.

"I've been working really hard writing music for the band State of Emergency. It's kind of weird, you know. I got a call about a month ago from Mark (Roberge) saying the music they had been creating was a little different from what they expected it to be. As it turned out, what they were writing was nothing like what we were doing under the name Prospect Hill over the years. So, they decided to rename the project they were doing and take the Prospect Hill we created ... with me as lead singer ... and keep it intact, which makes sense. On one hand, I wished that was the decision right off the bat, to take time off for a side project and keep the band intact. But that's not what they chose to do, and I am cool with it. In the end, we are giving the fans what they want, and to me that's what's most important, no matter how we got here."

Fithian says that the band will be doing local shows periodically. "We will probably do a show in January or over the holidays. The goal is to do the Prospect Hill stuff every few months around New England."

Asked what really happened during the breakup and how he and the band got back together, Fithian seemed laid back and mellow about the bad blood in the past. "It wasn't really my decision, it was all Mark. There was never... I mean, I put it all behind me and moved forward. Its weird after a year to have all that Facebook stuff [on the band page] put back the way it was, like nothing ever happened, ... I don't know how to process some of it. It's weird. I'm adjusting. The fans deserve the best and what I do is for the fans. It's all good."

"We are doing this for all our New England fans. The reason I'm doing it is for the people, the first people who put us on the map, our home crowd. The home fans, they made Prospect Hill what it is. That's the reason this show is happening."

Fithian says he really hopes everyone comes out to the Lowell show on October 17th. "And I hope they will be there singing every word just like they used to."

One of their last shows before breaking up with Adam Fithian was the Valley Patriot's 10th Anniversary BASH in 2014.

Anne's Andover Notebook

Anne Knowles
ANDOVER COLUMNIST

Spooky things are happening this month in Andover. The Andover Historical Society has planned several events that will be interesting to every age group. Please look at their website for a listing of activities.

On October 15 at 7pm, local historian and storyteller Gail Ralston, will discuss a very popular form of entertainment from the 19th century. One of Andover's well-known residents, Harriet Beecher Stowe, was said to host Séances in her home.

Reservations are required for this unusual event. Contact the Historical Society, 97 Main Street, for information and tickets.

A Very Special Family Pumpkin Festival is scheduled for Friday October 23, from 4-5:30pm at the West Parish Garden Cemetery, 129 Reservation Road, Andover.

Children of any age and families are invited to take part and bring their decorated Jack O'Lanterns to this outing. Carved pumpkins will be on display in the Children's Garden. Costumes are encouraged. A stroll through the garden will be followed by a Pumpkin Lighting – votive candles will be provided for the pumpkins. A magician will perform for everyone's amazement. Lemonade and popcorn will be served.

Closing Day for the successful Farmer's Market – 2015 will be Saturday October 31, from 10am-2pm. Produce and craft items will be on display for purchase. Fall items and pumpkins and gourds will be available. Come in Halloween costumes, whatever your age. The Farmer's Market is free and open to the public and is located at 93-97 Main Street.

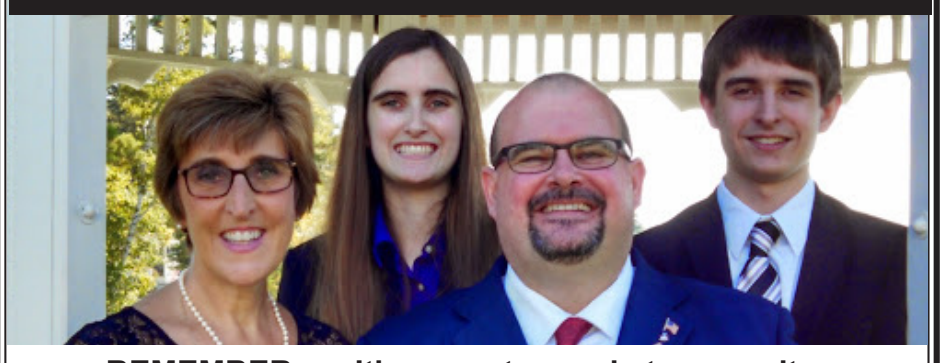
***

Andrew P. Flanagan, newly appointed Town Manager for Andover, will take the Oath of Office on October 15, 2015 at a Welcome Reception. The reception will take place at the James Doherty Hall, Old Town Hall, 20 Main Street, Andover Center from 5-7:00pm. Refreshments will be served.

Mr. Flanagan was selected by unanimous vote of the board of selectmen, to serve a five-year term. Mr. Flanagan has served as a town administrator in Newburyport and has been Deputy Town Manager for Arlington, MA.

Lawrence Murphy, Town Clerk for Andover, expressed his enthusiasm for Mr. Flanagan saying, "he has a great background in municipal administration". He added that Mr. Flanagan was, "personable and well qualified". Those who have met Mr. Flanagan have said he is an excellent choice for the position of Town Manager. Town residents will have the opportunity to meet Mr. Flanagan at his reception.

HAVE YOU CREATED A PLAN TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY IN THE EVENT YOU ARE NO LONGER HERE?



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NORTH ANDOVER - Grand opening for the new North Andover Central Fire Station is scheduled for Saturday November 7th.

GOSSELIN SHOULD RUN FOR SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Former Lawrence City Councilor Marie Gosselin placed in 7th in the at large race last month. The way the votes are divided she is a longshot at best to take a seat in the at-large race. My advice to Marie would be to drop out of the race for city council and run a sticker campaign for school committee. There are six open seats on the school committee and only two of those seats have a candidate running. Since Gosselin lives in District F, all she has to do is get 50 people to write her name on the ballot or place a sticker on the ballot with her name on it and she is automatically on the school committee. Of course, she never took my advice in the past so I expect Marie to stay in the at-large race and place seventh in the final election.

NEW HEAV'NLY DONUTS OPENS IN DRACUT - There's a new Heav'nly Donuts in Dracut and we couldn't be more excited. The new location is at 592 Merrimack Street. While you are there make sure to pick up a copy of The Valley Patriot and thank them for carrying it!

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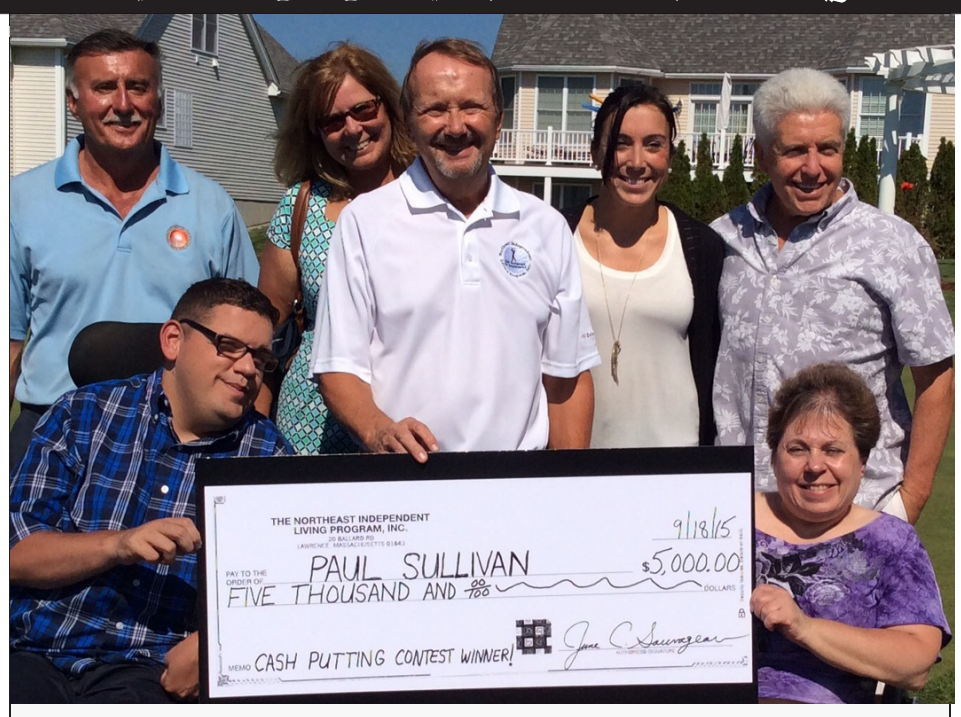

North East Independent Living Program's 12th Annual Golf Tournament of Independence Putting Contest Winner Ceremony at the Merrimack Valley Golf Club in Methuen, MA, on September 18, 2015. Pictured are (back row, left to right) Dick Diodati, Merrimack Valley Golf Club; June Sauvageau, NILP Executive Director; Paul Sullivan, Putting Contest Prize Winner!; Brittany Couture, NILP Contract LTSS Coordinator & NILP Golf Committee Member; and George Kattar, Merrimack Valley Golf Club. Front row holding prize winner check, left to right, Kevin Hatch, NILP Board of Directors President; and Nanette Goodwin, NILP Assistant Director. Congratulations to Paul Sullivan!

BRADSTREET SCHOOL IN NORTH ANDOVER – Last month we were told that the construction on the Bradstreet School had to take place on a Saturday morning at 7AM because they were on an accelerated schedule and had to get done before the cold weather. Once the building came down however, there has been no construction at all on the Bradstreet site. I'm getting ready to declare shenanigans.

LAWRENCE RESTRICTING VOTER ACCESS? – The Valley Patriot received several complaints on Election Day that one of the entrances to the South Lawrence East School was locked. Several voters told The Valley Patriot that they assumed the voting location had changed and went home. One caller to The Valley Patirot, Pat Lynch, was so put off that he filed a complaint with the Secretary of State's Office.

"On September 22 at 3:00 I attempted to enter the South Lawrence East School to vote. I always use the south entrance but on that day the gate was padlocked. I was forced to go to a parking lot across the street. I was able to vote, but wonder how many were turned away because the gate was locked? Today I went to the same school and found the same entrance open. I would encourage the Secretary of State's office to investigate why the gate was locked in the first place".

I haven't had time to get to the bottom of this but by next month I will, and will publish my findings.

JAKE TAPPER, CNN WHITE WASH FACTS AND LIE TO

THE VIEWERS TO PROMOTE POLITICAL AGENDA

Just to give you an idea how badly the so-called news media (and in particular CNN) purposely misrepresents facts to suit their narrative consider this. The UCC Oregon shooter who killed ten people last month was Black. Someone at CNN photo shopped his photo to make him look White. But that's to be expected from the race baiting liberals and CNN. But when it turned out that the shooter was singling out Catholics and other Christians for execution, here is how Jake Tapper from CNN described it. "One witness said that while there was a report the shooter was asking people if they were Christians, everyone who answered the question was shot. Not just the Christians." This is the most blatant example of media deception I have seen since ... well last month. What Jake Tapper didn't tell you is that those who said they were Christians were shot in the head ... while those who gave other answers were shot in the leg. So, while Tapper wasn't necessarily lying when he "reported" that "everyone who answered was shot." He was purposely giving his viewers the impression that the shooter was NOT targeting Christians. Shame on CNN and shame on Jake Tapper for lying to their viewers to promote a political agenda.

LOWELL TURNOUT PATHETIC

The City of Lowell held their preliminary elections last month for city council and school committee. So few people bothered to vote that Lowell actually had a lower turnout than Lawrence. Well, sort of. Lawrence had 9% of the registered voters turn out while Lowell had 12% of the registered voters go to the polls. But, keeping in mind that most people are not registered to vote, the percentage of the population who turned out to vote in Lowell was a little more than 2% while Lawrence had 4%. What is most sad is that we are losing our democracy at the local level. So few people care enough about what is going on in their community that our local governments are eroding. This leads to local communities and infrastructure eroding. But, instead of local officials talking about how to raise voter turnout they are talking about taking away your right to vote by cancelling primary elections if there "aren't enough candidates to eliminate".

ENTER RITA MERCIER

The top vote getter on Election Day in Lowell last month was former mayor Rita Mercier. One thing everyone agrees on is that Rita tops the ticket because she speaks her mind and never holds back. Nothing proved that more than the interview she did on election night when she was asked if Lowell should cancel preliminary elections because of such low participation by voters and candidates. "Absolutely not!" Rita barked. "That's our right to vote, the people's right to vote. You can't take that away I don't care how many people don't show up." Rita then went on to rail against cancelling elections in a way that sent a message loud and clear that elections belong to the voters, not the candidates or the elected officials. And now you know why I love her so much!

METHUEN ELECTIONS - While there is no real excitement in this year's municipal elections in Methuen, there are a few races worth taking a look at. The At-Large (or city wide) City Council election will be very close on November 3rd, especially with a low turnout expected.

The Methuen City Council is made up of nine members. Three councilors are elected at-large (city wide), while six councilors are

CONTINUED: UNDER FREDDIE

Vote Bryan Sweet for Re-Election to Methuen School Committee on November 03, 2015

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Bryan Sweet
Methuen School Committee

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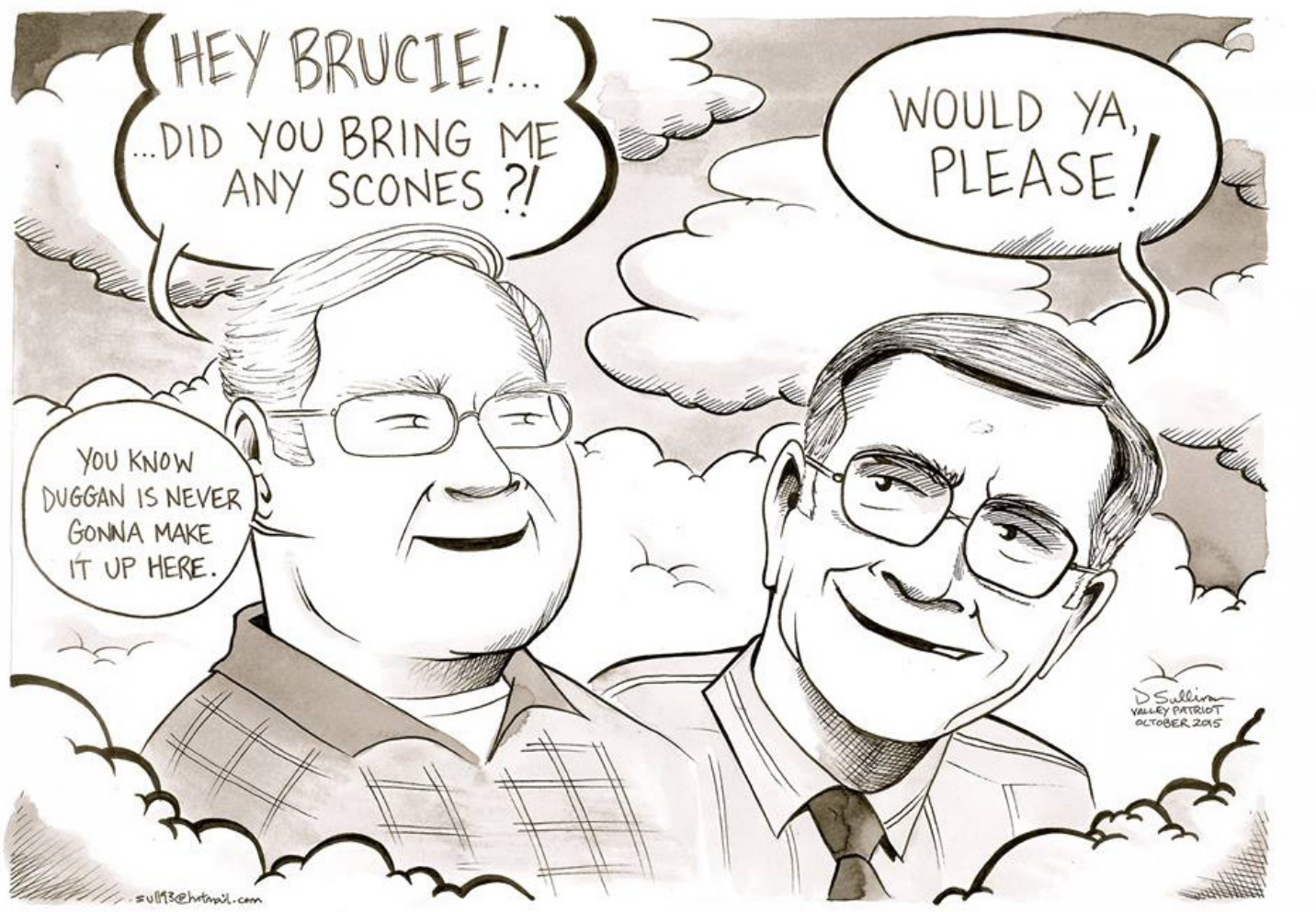

Two years ago, we lost our friend Ronnie Ford. Last month, we lost Bruce Arnold. Ronnie and Bruce were staples on the radio in the Merrimack Valley for decades. Ford was the host of "Hot Line" which aired just before "Paying Attention with Tom Duggan". Bruce Arnold and Ronnie Ford were great friends and we miss them both.

elected by district. There are three districts in Methuen with two councilors representing each district.

AT LARGE - ELECT 3

There are five candidates running for three open seats in the at-large, city council race. Two of those five candidates are incumbent (at-large) city councilors running for re-election: Jim Jajuga and Dan Grayton. At-Large Councilor Joyce Campagnone is not allowed to run for re-election because of term limits.

Dan Grayton is seeking his second term on the council after a surprise win two years ago over several candidates including Bob Leblanc, who was considered a favorite in that race until channel 5 news ran a story about Leblanc stalking a teenage boy.

Since taking office, Grayton has been a superstar on the council in the last two years, angering Jim Jajuga who often loses his cool when anyone else get's the spotlight he so desperately craves. Grayton voted against raising taxes and increasing spending, even voting against giving raises in city hall, as well as the funding of the new clubhouse and turf at Methuen High.

Jajuga, on the other hand, has never seen a tax he didn't like. Jajuga is a former state senator and Massachusetts State Police Officer. He's passionate. PASSIONATE! I tell you... and if you don't believe me you can ask him. Jajuga is well known for patting himself on the back for having so much "passion", especially when there are cameras around.

Jen Kannan is a former at-large city councilor who stepped down in 2013 to run for mayor against Steve Zanni. She was an extremely popular councilor who was best known for how well she handled constituent services and dealing with the public. She was defeated by Zanni in 2013, but remained behind the scenes helping other candidates, like State Representative Diana DiZoglio in her campaign for re-election to the legislature last year.

Sean Fountain is a hero firefighter who serves as the West End District Councilor and was elected council president in 2013. Fountain moved out of his district and is now running in the at-large race. Fountain touts himself as a fiscal conservative and was a champion for the new turf and clubhouse at the high school gaining him a great deal of support from sports and parents groups.

Sharon Birchall is a community activist, the head of the Lawrence Exchange Club and a member of the Lawrence Airport Commission. This is the second time Birchall is running for the at-large race.

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM - This is going to be a very close race. There is nobody on the inside who expects former senator Jim Jajuga to lose his seat, especially with only five candidates running for three positions. The real question is, with two very popular former councilors running: will Jen Kannan and Sean Fountain be

NOTEBOOK: PAGE 30

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Jana
#2 on the ballot
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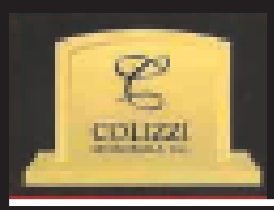

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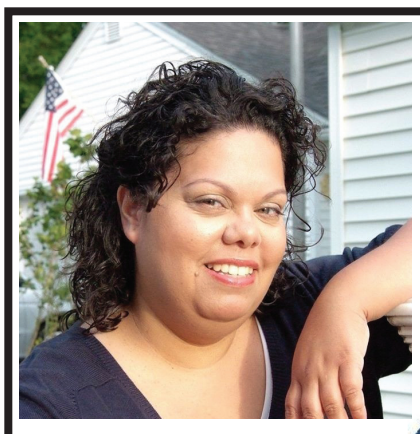

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Labor Union President Supports Removal of Mayor, Calls Rivera "Sexist", "Racist", "an Oreo Cookie"

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRITO PUBLISHER

The president of a local labor union is coming under fire from a political action committee (PAC) for what is being called "racist" comments. Mike Gagliardi, President of Laborers Union Local 175 in Methuen made the comments in a Valley Patriot story posted on valleypatriot.com on September 17th.

Andrew Goodrich, President of Jobs First IE PAC is calling on local officials to denounce the "hate speech" of labor leader Mike Gagliardi. Jobs First IE PAC is a political action committee that describes itself as "committed to supporting candidates who will bring transparency and fiscal responsibility to Beacon Hill".

"Democrats around Lawrence have a choice to make – condemn the divisive, racialized, rhetoric of union boss Mike Gagliardi, or embrace the racial slurs that he spews. According to The Valley Patriot, Gagliardi referred to Lawrence mayor Dan Rivera as an "Oreo Cookie", accused him of "running to Andover with his white, rich, Republican friends" and said "Worst of all, he stood with the whitest white man in Massachusetts".

GAGLIARDI'S COMMENTS

Gagliardi told The Valley Patriot in an exclusive interview last month that he and the 1,000 members of his union are "supporting the removal of Mayor Dan Rivera 100%." He then appeared on a local Spanish language radio program saying Rivera was a "racist against Dominicans" and called him "an Oreo Cookie".

"His actions show his racism towards Dominicans," Gagliardi told The Valley Patriot. "So, yes, I refer to him as an Oreo Cookie because, during election, Danny Rivera said that he was going to give Latino children hope, an education, and help them economically to lift them up. But, all he has done is spend all his time in Boston, and Washington, D.C. with his rich, white, friends. As mayor of one of the most impoverished cities in the country, he should be in this city every single day helping poor Latinos get ahead. Instead, Danny Rivera is running to Andover with his white, rich, Republican friends at the Lanam Club, of which he is now a member. When was the last time you saw Danny in a Lawrence club? In Latino neighborhoods?"

SEXISM AND THE WHITEST WHITE MAN

"He refused to endorse even one woman in the last Democratic primary. He had a chance to support Diana DiZoglio, a woman who speaks fluent Spanish, and originally from Lawrence. Instead he decided to endorse the rich, white, guy from North Andover. As we see in the results of last election, women won the majority of the positions and Dan was opposed to all of them. He didn't support Diana, he refused to support Barbara L'Italien, Suzanne Bump, he even supported that do-nothing Barry Finegold, over someone as imminently qualified as Deb Goldberg for State Treasurer. Worst of all, he stood with the whitest, white man in Massachusetts, Warren Tolman, over Maura Healey for Attorney General. I think it's pretty clear what Rivera's prejudices are, and the people of Lawrence deserve the right to vote on a recall now that we have seen his disgraceful performance in the last year and a half."

"His actions show his racism towards Dominicans," Gagliardi told The Valley Patriot. "So, yes, I refer to him as an Oreo Cookie because, during election Danny Rivera said that he was going to give Latino children hope, an education, and help them economically to lift them up. But, all he has done is spend all his time in Boston, and Washington D.C. with his rich, white, friends."

MIKE GAGLIARDI, PRESIDENT LABORERS UNION, LOCAL 175

PAC CALLS ON DIZOGLIO AND L'ITALIEN TO DENOUNCE GAGLIARDI

"This hate speech does nothing but fan the flames of division in Lawrence, and local elected officials should side with common decency and condemn Gagliardi's comments," said Andrew Goodrich.

"Gagliardi's union, LIUNA Local 175, has donated to candidates in the Lawrence area. This will be a choice between keeping the special interest money flowing or standing up against intolerance. Two local pols in particular have accepted thousands of dollars from Local 175.

• State Rep. Diana DiZoglio received $2000 from the group in the last two years. Rep. DiZoglio represents the town of Andover, where Gagliardi apparently believes no Lawrence mayor should visit. During the 2014 election, DiZoglio denounced mailings that attacked her voting record. Failing to be at least equally critical of issueless, racialized rhetoric will demonstrate a complete lack of courage from Rep. DiZoglio.

• State Senator Barbara L'Italien

OREO COOKIE: PAGE 28

Fake Racism Story Prompts 911 Dispatcher to Sue City for Defamation, Invasion of Privacy

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT PUBLISHER

The viral media reports on a 911 dispatcher in Lawrence whose job was reportedly "on the line" for hanging up on "Spanish-speaking callers" has not only turned out to be false, but also may cost the city millions of dollars.

Diane D'Iorio, who has been a dispatcher since 2007, filed a lawsuit on Friday, seeking what could be unspecified millions against the Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera, Police Chief James Fitzpatrick, and the City of Lawrence. The suit asks for punitive damages for her reputation being smeared.

The suit alleges city officials defamed her when they portrayed her as a racist in news interviews, knowing her current suspension had nothing to do with the recordings being played on TV.

"The statements made by the defendants were made not only knowingly and intentionally made, but also with actual malice against the interests of the plaintiff, as the defendants actual knew that said statements were false and/or portrayed the plaintiff in a false light." (count one in D'Iorio v. City of Lawrence, River & Fitzpatrick)

AN ACCIDENT COMPLAINT MORPHS INTO FALSE CHARGES OF RACISM

Records show that D'Iorio was not suspended for hanging up on Spanish speaking callers, and that Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera gave a written recommendation that she be let off with a warning for mishandling the calls involving Spanish speaking callers.

A Valley Patriot investigation also showed that the suspension D'Iorio was serving when the news reports aired (on Boston TV news) was for not dispatching a cruiser to the scene of an accident, (on July 14th) when the caller reported that nobody was hurt, and there was no damage. She was not on suspension for any other complaint.

On that day, the policy of the Lawrence Police Department said that dispatchers had discretion on sending a cruiser if there was no damage and no injuries. The next day a new order was sent down by Chief Fitzpatrick mandating that a police cruiser be dispatched to all accidents, and that dispatchers no longer had discretion.

"If these guys are busy and they are chasing gun calls or a flood of domestics, do we really want to be tying them up on fender benders?" asked Ike Gabriel of the SEIU Union. Gabriel is representing D'Iorio on union violations with regard to this case.

"The dispatchers were given discretion and she used it. How it went from that incident to her personnel file being published, to snippets of unrelated phone calls being played on TV to make her look like a racist, is beyond me," Gabriel said in an interview in August.

Records show that D'Iorio was given a 30-day suspension for not dispatching a cruiser to an accident. She will return to work on Sunday (9-27) for the first time since the incidents occurred. Ike Gabriel said that all of the dispatchers support D'Iorio "especially the Latino dispatchers, they have stood by her since day one. They know this was all contrived."

Lawrence Police Chief James Fitzpatrick

INVASION OF PRIVACY COUNT II

D'Iorio's suit claims that confidential personnel information (from her private file at the police station) ended up being published in media reports. Back in August, Police Chief Fitzpatrick told The Valley Patriot that he was investigating who leaked D'Iorio's confidential, personal information and would prosecute whomever the culprit was. He said that there were "only three or four people would have access to those records and I will investigate who is responsible."

To date, The Valley Patriot has not been told of the progress on that investigation.

Comments and leaked information in news reports which published the stories of an out of control, racist dispatcher, included the Eagle~Tribune, CBS News in Boston ("A 911 dispatcher's job is on the line for hanging up on callers who couldn't speak English") and hundreds of other news outlets; including national cable news networks. All of which told the same narrative and portrayed the dispatcher as a racist who was being disciplined for discriminating against Latinos.

Election Results; Russell Loses, Then Wins... What Happened on Election Day

With only 9% of registered voters in Lawrence participating in the city's preliminary elections, at least one candidate has found himself one vote shy of being nominated for city council on election night.

But, the day after the election that candidate was told by the city clerk that he had actually won by three votes.

Rich Russell, a Vietnam veteran and activist at council meetings, was listed on the election totals as having placed seventh in an eight way race, being eliminated by one vote with 663 votes. The sixth place finisher who initially made the cut to go on to the November final was former District "C" Councilor Jorge Gonzalez.

Now, Gonzalez is out and Russell is in and there is still no explanation from the embattled Lawrence Election Department as to how those vote totals changed between election night counting and the following day.

Gonzalez did not make the deadline for a recount.

SOME SURPRISES IF WE BELEIVE THE NUMBERS

Perhaps the most surprising results were higher up on the at-large (city wide) council race where At-Large City Councilor Nilka Alvarez Rodriguez placed fourth (three get elected in November). Beating Alvarez was School Committeeman Jim Blatchford who got heavy support from Mayor Rivera, including an endorsement and automated phone calls to voters encouraging them to vote for him.

Embattled City Council President Modesto Maldonado placed second to newcomer Brian Depena, a long time activist in the Dominican community and owner of a tire shop on Broadway. Depena was the brain trust behind the successful campaign of outgoing District "D" City Councilor Onaida Aquino.

Lawrence Police Officer William Green, who is part of an effort to recall Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera, placed last in the at-large race. Four of the five candidates at the bottom of the at-large list support the recall.

FINAL NUMBERS... KIND OF ...

City Council At-Large, (City Wide) 6 Nominated, 3 to be elected in November:

Brian DePena 1,388
(I) Modesto Maldonado1,301
James Blatchford 1,252
(I) Nilka Alvarez Rodriguez 1,193
Marie Gosselin 835
Rich Russell 678

Jorge Gonzalez 675
Bill Green 471
(I) =Incumbent

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT A

The Lawrence City Council is made up nine members. Three city councilors are elected at-large (city-wide) and six members elected by districts, representing an equal number of people in the city.

District "A" is the Prospect Hill section of the city. It is currently represented by Sandy Almonte, who did not turn in her nomination papers by the deadline because of a health issues. School committee member Myra Ortiz did turn in papers and was the only candidate on the ballot.

Almonte was passing out stickers with her name and address on it for voters to use so she could get the required 50 write-ins to have her name appear on the November final ballot.

Almonte told The Valley Patriot that she decided not to turn in her nomination papers because of a pending health issue where she was waiting for word from her doctor on some test results. Almonte said that she got good news from her doctor after the deadline and decided to try and keep her seat with a successful write in campaign. Her name will appear on the November ballot.

RESULTS: PAGE 29

City of the Doomed?

Elections: Preliminary & General

Kathy Runge
VALLEY PATRIOT LAWRENCE COLUMNIST

I heard that the real reason for the extreme shortage of poll workers for the Preliminary Election was that the city required the poll workers to be citizens (of the United States). Does that mean that there were non-citizens working the polls for the other elections?

There was at least one person who had an inactive voter registration that the poll workers somehow couldn't find. This person gave the name and address that was on their voter registration and was at the correct polling location. The possibility of voting provisionally was never mentioned. Poll workers never called the Elections Division to see if the person was registered in the city. Were they too busy to help? I can hardly believe that given the exceedingly low voter turnout.

Not one member of the Board of Registrars was present in the Elections Division after polls closed except City Clerk William Maloney.

The only sticker candidate to be successful was Councilor Almonte. I hear reports that she was seen giving tickets of some sort to people who took her stickers. This could be the start of a disturbing trend. Even the appearance of an impropriety at the polls is not what this city needs.

Two ballots from District F were found in the side pocket of the voting machine after the election night tally was completed. These are ballots that the machine wouldn't accept. They were placed in a sealed envelope. At the September 29th meeting the Board of Registrars held to certify the election results, the board voted to count these ballots.

One of the ballots contained a sticker with a vote for a candidate who was running a sticker campaign for District F School Committee. Unfortunately the sticker was placed in the write-in section for the Technical School Committee. The Board of Registrars voted 2-1 to apply that write-in vote to the Lawrence School Committee race. President Nikolas Petrakis and board member Aldonsa Pereyra voted in favor while William Maloney voted against. How can they presume to know the intent of the voter?

There were no votes on these ballots for either Richard Russell or Jorge Gonzalez, who were fighting for the sixth spot on the ballot for Councilor at Large, so Richard Russell is on the November ballot with a 3-vote margin.

This is going to be an important election. The top vote getter for Councilor at Large, first time candidate Brian DePena, is said to be gathering allies to support his bid for Council President. Heaven help us. Although Mr. DePena claims to not be associated with Lantigua anymore, the two of them were recently seen associating. Where, you ask? Here's a hint: not in the United States. Of course, he could hardly be a worse Council President than Councilor Maldonado.

Mr. DePena claims to be against the recall but I hesitate to believe that. I've heard him say little else in English. He may be a great person and wonderful friend but that doesn't make a good councilor. I haven't seen him at any neighborhood meetings. He doesn't seem to care about introducing himself to the voters who don't know him.

DePena's Spanish language campaign is at least partially based on ethnic division. In the June 4th edition of El Mundo Boston he said that the lack of minority representation in police departments is getting critical nationwide, and that although Latinos are 70% of our city there are only two or three Latino police officers and firefighters in Lawrence. Why would he lie like that?

My recommendations for Councilor at Large are Richard Russell, James Blatchford and Nilka Alvarez-Rodriguez. I don't agree with all of their positions but I believe they are fair, knowledgeable, and

DOOMED: PAGE 28

9% Voter Turnout Called "Pathetic" Plenty of Blame to Go Around

Sad, pathetic, and disappointing. All words used by candidates and their supporters in Lawrence Tuesday as the city held it's preliminary elections for city council and school committee.

With mild, summer-like weather, most polling places had more candidates holding signs outside, than voters in polling booths.

Lawrence has nearly 90,000 residents (including illegal aliens) only 37,998 people are registered to vote (approx. 40%). On Tuesday, only 3,539 people bothered to participate in the city election, which is 9.3% of registered voters and 4% of Lawrence residents.

Apathy in Lawrence was so bad Tuesday that four of the six open seats on the Lawrence School Committee had no candidates at all. In the two districts that did have candidates, no candidates were eliminated in the preliminary election. School Committeeman Myra Ortiz said she believes low voter interest in the school committee races is because the Lawrence School System is currently under state receivership where the committee acts in an advisory role and has absolutely no authority to make decisions.

At-large city council candidate Jim Blatchford pointed out some of the factors in the low turnout.

"We've changed five polling locations in some major areas that I know of; on Prospect Hill, The Leahey School, the South Lawrence East School."

Blatchford also pointed out that the city clerk put notices in the daily English-only newspaper in a city where more than 80% of the residents speak Spanish as their primary language."

"My issue with that is, we have the registered voters addresses, so these are the people who show up to vote. We know who they are. We know who's registered to vote. Why don't we send a mailer that says 'hey, by the way, you're polling location has changed. Maybe we would have gotten the people who didn't know the election was today."

Blatchford also blamed the city council. "If we have a city council that was taking care of the little things, maybe the mayor could do some of these initiatives and not have to worry about being recalled every two years. There's a simple solution to a not complex problem. The reason we're not doing it is because we have a city council that is choosing to put it own efforts first. They don't care about the civic process sometimes. That's the biggest problem in Lawrence, when you have more people voting in Lawrence, Lawrence is better"

But, District E council candidate Dave

Abdoo took a different approach, saying it's really the responsibility of the people of Lawrence.

"First and foremost, it's the citizenry's responsibility to know these things. Every September and November, whether it is local, state, or otherwise, we have an election. Nonetheless, the city should do its best to make sure it is on every website, get it out on social media, get it out to every public place. Definitely in the City of Lawrence we need to have more participation in government. I don't think it's because people don't care, there's no mayor on the ballot, no governor, and there are no big headline candidates. So, we have a city Council race and really it's up to the candidates to generate excitement for our respective campaigns. Maybe we need to be doing a better job of that.

Abdoo says he remembers not long ago that the city put up blinking road signs reminding people when Election Day was a week before each election.

At-large city council candidate Rich Russel said the media bears some responsibility. "We need to publicize the fact that there's an election, but this was very poorly publicized by everybody. You and The Valley Patriot did publicize it, but several other media publications gave no publicity, made no commitments, made no endorsements at all. They just let it go. They're dwelling on other issues that surround the election."

Rep Report: Action Regarding The Department of Children and Families (DCF)

With "Lessons Learned" From The Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley

Rep. Linda Dean Campbell
VALLEY PATRIOT METHUEN COLUMNIST

The Baker Administration has placed our DCF under new executive leadership that is deeply committed to effecting very necessary improvements in our State's child protection systems. As a member of the House Committee on Ways and Means, I can tell you that the Legislature is highly supportive of and a collaborating partner in all of these efforts.

The supplemental budget just passed by the House provides an additional $7 Million for immediate staffing, caseload handling, and training needs. It also requires the DCF to report what new policies and procedures are being implemented to improve its operations by November 15th of this year.

When the FY 2016 Budget was passed last summer, $907.7 million was appropriated for Child Welfare programs and services. This represents a $43.1 million, 5 percent, increase over the previous year's spending. This spending was directed towards systems upgrades to better manage caseloads. I am closely watching for meaningful improvements resulting the various support tools provided to our caseworkers so they can perform their jobs far more effectively.

When advocating for reforms and improvements, we should acknowledge and always remember that that the overwhelming majority, 99%, of those who work for our DCF are very dedicated and most competent professionals who perform the most difficult and stressful of jobs in good faith. It is also very important for us to remember that there are very real risks associated with any course of action that our DCF might decide to undertake on the behalf of a child. Given that we are dealing in human behavior, there are no certainties as to what course shall produce a positive outcome, or a most negative one. Instead of crucifying the reasonable, we should have their backs when a tragedy occurs.

When children are unnecessarily removed from the home by the DCF, both they and their families are traumatized and often incur considerable harm as a result of it. Should a foster care stay become long term, especially in the vast majority of our DCF's cases which are for different degrees of child neglect and not for the conscious abuse of a child, then the ward "protected" in foster care incurs at least a six to seven times greater chance of having a most negative outcome long term, both while in foster care and later on in adulthood. Negative things include increased likelihood of being a sexual assault victim, becoming pregnant as a single teen before one is ready for it, becoming drug addicted, being incarcerated for long periods beginning at a very young age, or becoming very prematurely dead. In conclusion, we must always very carefully balance the benefits against the risks of removing a child from their home especially in the long term – if we are not always playing for the best "long odds" possible for all of these children, we all are both fools and cowards.

State Rep Linda Dean Campbell represents 15th Essex (Methuen and Haverhill). She currently serves as the Acting Chair of Public Safety, on the Committees on Ways and Means, State Administration, New Technologies and Economic Development.

She can be reached at 617.722.2340/ Linda.Campbell@mahouse.gov or representative.linda.campbell@gmail.com.

I respectfully ask for your vote on Tuesday, Nov. 3rd.

Re-Elect
RON
Marsan
Methuen
East District Councillor

Paid for by the committee to re-elect Ron Marsan

Elect
Sharon
Birchall

* Public Safety * Education
* Fiscal Accountability
* Community Involvement

Methuen City Council
At Large

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Sharon Birchall

Jennifer KANNAN will be your voice on the Methuen City Council.
As a lifelong resident she has a deep commitment and love for our city.
Jennifer will make sure that our city government is there to serve you.
*Councilor at Large: 2008-2013 * *Chairwoman of the City Council: 2012

ELECT
Jennifer Aziz
Kannan

Methuen City Councilor at Large
VOTE KANNAN ON NOVEMBER 3, 2015

Why I am Running Again For Methuen School Committee

DJ Deeb
VALLEY PATRIOT METHUEN COLUMNIST

As most Valley Patriot readers already know, the Methuen Municipal Elections are scheduled for Tuesday, November 3rd. I am running for re-election to the Methuen School Committee because I want to continue to give back to the community that I have made my home.

The Methuen Public Schools are a good school system. The teachers and administrators in Methuen are dedicated professionals who care deeply about the well-being of their students. At the same time, however, there are some concerns that I have as a career educator about current trends.

Two years ago as a first-time candidate for Methuen School Committee, I pointed out in my October 2013 column that 8% of Methuen's School budget ($32,500 per student) was being spent on out-of-district placements. I stated then that we could save money by reducing some of these out-of-district placements. I am proud to report that we have reduced out-of-district Special Education placements this past year by over 20% saving Methuen taxpayers over $100,000 annually.

Although contractual obligations and instructional costs have forced the Methuen Public Schools Budget to increase (as has the City Budget), we have reduced Administrative costs from 3.02% of the overall budget to under 2.75% of the overall budget, far below state average.

In 2013, Methuen lagged behind state average and surrounding towns statistically with the number of students who graduate from high school in four years. Methuen had a 79% graduation rate. We have increased that significantly to 86.4% (above state average of 85%). We have also successfully reduced the dropout rate from 7.5% to 2.1% (now below state average of 2.3%). We need to continue to focus more on student retention and increase our graduation rate. The low-income population in Methuen is below state average (42.3% in Methuen compared to 38% statewide average), but still the most likely to drop out. We have worked to do a better job identifying and addressing their needs and retaining these students.

Hundreds of students have been sent back to Lawrence since 2011 because they were not Methuen residents. The current School Committee and Superintendent deserve credit for being proactive here these last 4 years. We need to continue to ensure that all students attending reside in Methuen.

In 2013, I wrote that Methuen spends far below state average on instructional materials and technology as well as on Professional Development for teachers. This has contributed to Methuen Public Schools receiving a lower rating from the State. Two years ago I proposed that we needed to increase professional development offerings and available technology for teachers to improve their content knowledge and meet student needs. We have done just that. Computers and Smartboards when used effectively in the classroom can cater to all student learning styles resulting in increased student performance and are now being utilized at the new state-of-the-art Methuen High School and the elementary schools.

Class Sizes are above state average in Methuen. In 2013, Methuen was 15:1 compared to the state average of 13.5:1. This too contributes to a low rating by the State for Methuen Schools. We are making progress. This past year class sizes in Methuen have been reduced to an average of 14.7 to 1. We need to continue our work in making it a priority to reduce class sizes and the student/teacher ratio in order to improve student learning.

Many parents have expressed legitimate concern about the number of professional development half-days that have taken away from instructional time during the academic school year. The School Committee adopted a calendar reducing Professional Development half-days from 10 to 5, thus increasing instructional learning time for students in Grades K-12.

One of my proudest votes this past year was to Co-Sponsor a Motion to reject Common Core PARCC Testing and keep the current high-stakes MCAS Test for students. MCAS has forced school districts to raise their standards, realign curricula, and has served to benefit our students overall. It has made Massachusetts Schools #1 in the Nation for student achievement. The Common Core curricula was written by corporate executives without any meaningful educator input. The current School Committee voted to send a letter along with Mayor Zanni to Governor Charlie Baker supporting MCAS and opposing Common Core. If re-elected, I will continue to staunchly oppose the Bill Gates corporate-sponsored Common Core and PARCC Testing in Methuen Schools and the Commonwealth, which if adopted will lead to lower standards and a dumbed-down curricula.

As an energetic public high school teacher, college instructor, and leader in our community, I have the experience to make sure that our tax dollars produce better results for Methuen's students.

We need to continue to improve Methuen's MCAS and SAT scores, reduce the student drop-out rate, increase the

DEEB: PAGE 21

Methuen Acquires 9-11 World Trade Center Artifact

The City of Methuen has acquired a piece of American history. After months of work with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the city has received a steel beam from the World Trade Center towers. This artifact was displayed and presented at the City of Methuen's Annual 9/11 Remembrance. The Remembrance Ceremony took place at the Central Fire Station, 24 Lowell St., Methuen.

"Receiving a piece of the World Trade Center will be a constant reminder of that fateful day in 2001 when all of our lives changed forever," says Mayor Steve Zanni. "It will serve as a tangible tribute to the many lives lost, including six of our own Methuen natives. Our annual remembrance also pays homage to the public safety personnel who sacrificed their own lives to save others."

The steel beam weighs 106 pounds and measures 60 inches in length, 13 inches wide, and 6 inches high. The Mayor's Office, along with Methuen resident Scott Flagg, worked with the Port Authority to secure the artifact for Methuen.

The steel beam will be displayed outside the Central Fire Station permanently as a monument to September 11, 2001 and the many victims and heroes of that day.

Home Depot Employees Volunteers Paint The Psychological Center's Daybreak Shelter, in Lawrence

TPC - Daybreak Shelter provides temporary shelter, up to thirty days, for homeless men and women over the age of eighteen. The Shelter is open from 5pm on a first come, first served basis, to 8am each day. Breakfast and dinner are served each day.

"The Guests at Daybreak Shelter, from various cities and towns, were very excited with the brightness of the shelter when they arrived on Saturday evening. The painting project, all provided by Methuen Home Depot, really made a difference and that is what we are all about. The Psychological Center is committed to improving the quality of people's lives every day. We would like to thank the City of Lawrence and Methuen Home Depot for their support of our shelter, this project and future projects." – Carina Pappalardo, CEO

"Committed to improving the quality of people's lives every day." Please consider The Psychological Center your charity of choice and make a donation today.

JOAQUIN: FROM PAGE 3

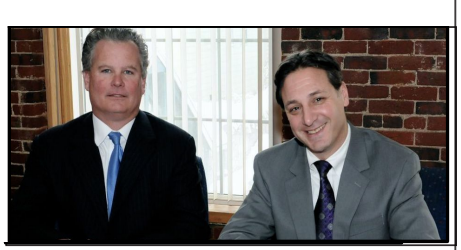
a hurricane or even a winter storm makes forecasting the weather a challenge. This is why you should check the weather forecast each day because computer models can change from day to day.

Even though we feel relieved missing hurricane Joaquin, historic flooding occurred across South Carolina. Lots of roads in the Charleston, South Carolina were under water. These areas saw over a foot of rain. This rain was caused by a low pressure system (not Joaquin), and a stationary front. Stationary fronts can cause heavy rain. The heavy rain was enhanced by tropical moisture coming in off the Atlantic ocean. With strong high pressure over Canada and lower pressure to the south this causes a strong pressure gradient (lots of wind). Strong winds caused trees and power lines to come down in South Carolina causing power outages. There were also some power outages in eastern MA near the coast due to the strong winds. With strong winds along the coast and high Astronomical high tides coastal flooding occurred from New England all the way down the east coast. As we move into the week of October 5 the weather will begin to calm down with lots of sun and warmer temperatures. Also with the strong Northeast winds diminishing this will end the coasting flooding situation. Enjoy Fall!!

Before I close one last mention of Joaquin. The track of the hurricane passed close enough to Bermuda to cause heavy rain (flooding) and strong damaging winds (Power Outages) later Sunday & Sunday night October 4.

BROADHURST TABIT

Where the Merrimack Valley turns to for legal counsel



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Cultural Competency Should Be the Immediate Order of the Day

Shannon Butler-Mokoro
VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST COLUMNIST

There was an election. A winner was declared. There were threats of lynching. Social media blew up with the N-word. Graffiti was sprayed. A bathroom toilet was destroyed. No, I am not writing about the primary elections in the city of Lowell. I am writing about the student government elections at Lowell High School. And the response has been silence.

Lowell has been and is a city of immigrants since its beginning. It is the fourth largest city in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. 41.9% of Lowell residents speak a language other than English. 24.8% of our residents are born outside on the United States. Lowell has the second largest public high school in the Commonwealth. The combination of size and diverse population demands that the administration and teachers be culturally competent and promote equity, inclusion, and justice.

No acts of hate should be tolerated. Those who verbalize or post on social media or anywhere else threats against other students based on race, ethnicity or any other social identity should be punished. Parents should be contacted and measures taken to protect the victimized target and punish the perpetrators. Administrators and teachers must take the lead and not request that students just make peace and pose for pictures to give a false image of harmony. Our society has been blowing up with issues of racial hatred since our nation's foundation, but most especially since the killing of Trayvon Martin. Schools cannot be silent and by their silence advocate such madness.

The National Education Association promotes cultural competency and has tools to help schools. On their website, NEA President Dennis Van Roekel is quoted as saying "Educators with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to value the diversity among students will contribute to an educational system designed to serve all students well." Superintendent Khelfaoui, Headmaster Martin, and B-House Housemaster Deidre Haley take note. We the residents and parents of Lowell are concerned and will not sit quietly by while our sons are threatened because they ran and won a fair election. We are waiting for effective action and for continued assurance of cultural competency in our schools. Do your job. Lead by example.

Shannon Butler-Mokoro, an M.S.W., Ph.D. is an associate professor of social work and sociology at Salem State University, lives in Lowell. She teaches and writes about cultural competency, diversity, and race, class, gender, and ethnicity.

What Did the Preliminary Election Mean in Lowell?

John MacDonald
VALLEY PATRIOT LOWELL COLUMNIST

The September 28th Lowell City Council preliminary election brought excitement and interested voters to the polls in droves! Street corners and coffee shops were abuzz with conversation about the highly anticipated and important municipal election. The people of Lowell realized the direct impact of the people they voted for on their taxes to the condition of the city streets, right down to the cracks in the sidewalk. Oh, how impressive it was to see such active civil participation.

Wait... I wish. That's a complete lie.

In reality, Lowell experienced a deplorable turnout of 6.7% (3,939 of 58,878 registered voters. The last preliminary, in 2013, got about 12%) in an election that would whittle the field of 19 candidates to 18. So what are some of the potential reasons for such a low turnout?

Perhaps it's that the city is in a period of relative calm and harmony. Lowell's City Manager Kevin Murphy and the City Council are working together and accomplishing the city's business in a professional and effective way. Manager Murphy has demonstrated an acute political acumen for involving and informing his bosses of everything going on in the city. He's been dubbed "The Great Communicator" by City Councilors that seem to be extremely pleased by his performance. Even some of his greatest critics in the past have been effusive in praise of the job he has done.

The current council led by Mayor Elliott conducts its business efficiently and effectively. Mayor Elliott has made the city proud and has set the bar as to how any future mayors should carry themselves when serving the city. His fellow councilors appear to work tirelessly and when it comes to disagreement, never do they delve into the personal unprofessional attacks of the past. They professionally present their opinions and take votes accordingly. It's not perfect, but after following politics my entire life I haven't seen a council or city manager work better together. Diverse in experience and unified in wanting Lowell to be a better place, this group of incumbents all deserve re-election.

So why the apathy at the polls? I hope it's not just due to the overall satisfaction in the city, because not showing up at the polls isn't the way to show appreciation. The low turnout delivered little to those challengers and incumbents that spent their summer knocking on doors and sharing their views for moving Lowell forward. In actuality from a candidate's standpoint, it was a major let down. However there were a few important takeaways in my opinion.

• The incumbents for the most part are strong. Rita Mercier remains the most popular politician in Lowell. Only one sitting councilor fell out of the top 9. Councilor Corey Belanger will have to work extra hard letting people know why he deserves re-election. My guess is he will bounce back.

• 4 Asian candidates entered the race. People expected them to work together. They didn't and the best Asian candidate that would help represent the second largest contingent of Cambodian American's in the country didn't finish as high as he should have. Paul Ratha Yem is by far on of the best challengers in the entire race and the best Asian candidate in the field. Lowell should take notice and support this highly intelligent individual in the general election.

• The highly anticipated duel over who made the right choice for Lowell's next Superintendent of Schools played out. Sitting school committeeman and now city council challenger Jim Leary, a pro Jay Lang supporter, a pro "give the local guy a chance" trounced fellow school committeeman and council candidate Dave Conway "The anyone but Jay Lang candidate" in the preliminary election. Leary even showed that he could beat Conway in his own neighborhood. Conway was the first challenger to announce his candidacy for city council and it might be time to be the first to take a vacation.

• Joe Mendonca, former Lowell City Councilor who was an ardent/loyal supporter of the former City Manager Bernie Lynch and worked tirelessly for an unpopular "backyard chicken ordinance" actually showed some strength. He's an anti-tax, financially driven guy that may in fact attract voters who are never pleased with a tax increase. Will "Cotton Eyed" Joe deliver or lay an egg?

At the end of the day will Lowell come out strong for the General election in November? It's hard to say. Unless an incumbent falters, or if a challenger finds a way to differentiate themselves, results may remain the same. As things stand I'm going to vote for all the incumbents and will likely pick only one challenger. Jim Leary and Paul Ratha Yem are my choices as challenges and would work best with the current team of incumbents.

Finally, tune in to 980AM WCAP on Thursday nights from 6-7pm for my radio show "The Pulse". I host "The Pulse" and will have former Mayor Bud Caulfield and former Lowell city council candidate Freddy Doyle as my co-hosts talking all about the Lowell City Council and School Committee races until the general election.

Now mark your calendars and get out and VOTE!

John MacDonald is the President/CEO of Big Decisions, LLC, which is a management consulting business that concentrates on offering strategic advice on Marketing, Public Relations, Economic/ Business Development and Social Media. John has a long career of success, achieving record results in the communications field and spending over 20 years managing marketing budgets, driving the bottom line in the financial services, restaurant, retail and real estate industries.

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On The Campaign Trail in Lawrence

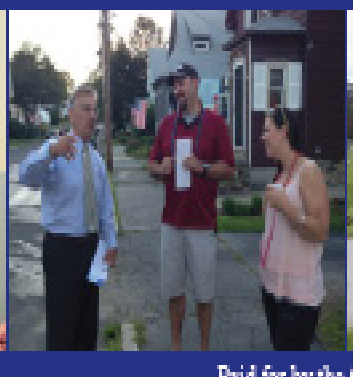
Mayor Zanni

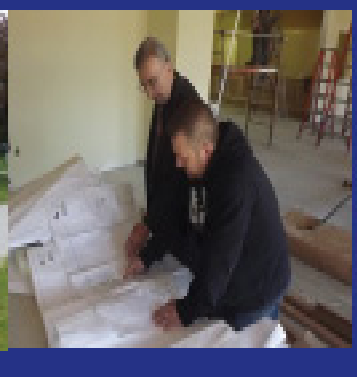
"From Day One I wanted to be a Mayor Methuen could be proud of. When I took office, I knew the only way to inspire pride was to deliver results for our City. I've worked to strengthen our local economy, attract new businesses, budget responsibly, deliver cost-savings, improve our schools, and treat every resident with respect they deserve. Exciting things are happening in Methuen, and I am grateful for all of the hard work of so many people in getting us to where we are."

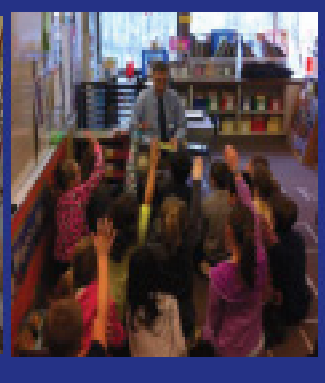
Stephen N. Zanni

Because Results Count

- High School delivered on budget
- Privatized Information Technology Dept
- Hired Social Workers to address addiction
- AA+ Bond Rating
- Balanced budgets that maintain services
- Increased access to 55 & older housing
- Renovated former Bea's site
- Route 93 rotary project has begun
- New athletic stadium & clubhouse
- Broadway Crossing Development
- Privatized City Hall custodian services
- Stopped the games & ended the lawsuits







Paid for by the Committee to Elect Steve Zanni

Members of the Methuen School Committee turned out for a fundraiser for School Committeeman DJ Deeb at Bada Bing's on Hampshire St. Pictured are: (bottom row) candidate Nick DiZoglio and School Committee members, Jana DiNatale and Bob Vogler. Top Row: Lynn Hajjar Kuum, DJ Deeb, and outgoing School Committee member Mary Jean Fawcett.

Miguelina Vargas started with McDonald's in 2010. She is a crew person at 147 Pelham St., Methuen, MA. McDonald's offers the "Archways to Education" program. The program lets all employees pursue their high school diploma and also helps to pay for college courses. Employees also get a free laptop when they have completed the course. Miguelina is only 1 of 3 people across the United States to achieve this great accomplishment .

Lowell City Councilor Rita Mercier was one of the guest speakers on the steps of Lowell City Hall at the candle light vigil last month for Parents of Murdered Children.

Massachusetts State Senator Barbara L'Italien (left) joined Chris Kombouras (middle) and his family with the biggest donut ever! (ok not ever!). Heav'nly Donuts celebrated their ribbon cuttiong of their new Dracut location, and we couldn't be more excited. The new location is at 592 Merrimack Street. While you are there make sure to pick up a copy of The Valley Patriot and thank them for carrying it!

I ask for your vote on NOVEMBER 3rd

** ELECT **

TOM G. CIULLA

East District Councilor

Paid For by the Committee to Elect Tom G. Ciulla

Andover Patrolman Chuck Edgerly was sworn in last month as Andover's newest sergeant. Edgerly was sworn in by Assistant Town Clerk Kathy McKenna on September 15, 2015. Congratulations Chuck!

VOTE DAVE ABDOO

Lawrence City Council District E

Leadership Integrity Accountability

Please Vote November 3

Visit www.daveabdoo.com Paid for by the Committee to Elect Dave Abdoo

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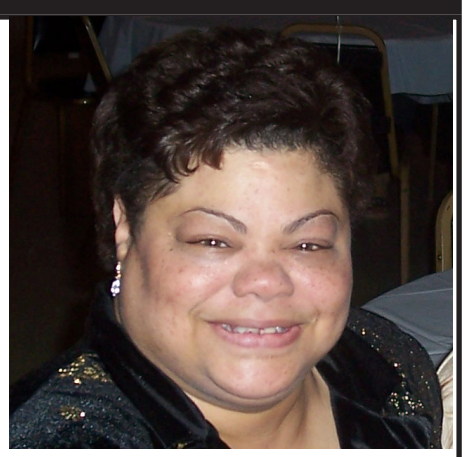
BRIAN DEPENA

MODESTO MALDONADO



NILKA ALVAREZ RODRIGUEZ

RUTH ROJAS

DISTRICT "B" CITY COUNCIL

ARLENE GARCIA

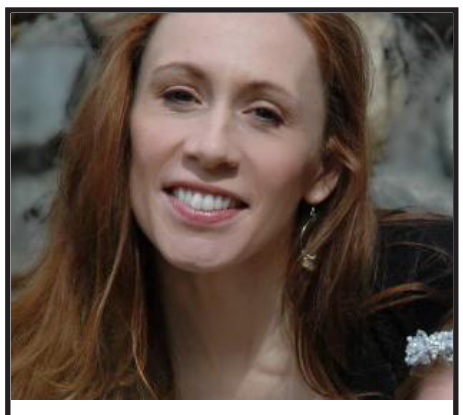
DISTRICT "C" CITY COUNCIL

LINETTE PEREZ

DISTRICT "D" CITY COUNCIL

FREDDY DIAZ

DISTRICT "E" CITY COUNCIL



AMY BERARD

DISTRICT "C" SCHOOL COMMITTEE

** *VOTE* **
* TUESDAY NOVEMBER 3, 2015 *

DiZoglio Bill Would Prohibit OxyContin Prescriptions for Children

Legislation Comes in Response to Recent FDA Approval of OxyContin to Children under Age 17

State Representative Diana DiZoglio (D-Methuen) has filed legislation prohibiting the prescription of OxyContin to children under age 17. DiZoglio's bill comes in response to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s August 13 approval of OxyContin for children as young as 11. OxyContin is an extended-release version of the painkiller oxycodone and has become known in recent years for its frequent abuse.

DiZoglio's bill, an act regulating OxyContin prescriptions for children, states that "no practitioner, registered nurse or licensed practical nurse authorized to administer, utilize, dispense or prescribe a controlled substance in the commonwealth shall prescribe any medication or prescription containing OxyContin to any person under the age of 17."

"OxyContin is manufactured by Purdue Pharma, a drug company which came under fire in 2007 after three of its top executives pled guilty to misleading doctors and the public about OxyContin's risk of addiction," said DiZoglio, who serves on the Joint Committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse in the legislature. "Recently, the FDA decided to ask that very same company to conduct its own studies on whether or not they deemed this highly addictive substance safe for young children. When I heard of this, I was outraged. We are in the middle of an opioid epidemic. This is no time to expand access to opioids, least of all to young, vulnerable children."

On September 9, a bipartisan group of eight U.S. Senators, including Sens. Edward Markey (D-MA), Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), penned a letter to the U.S. Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee calling for an investigation into the FDA's decision to approve OxyContin, as well as an examination of the rise in opioid abuse and overdose deaths. Their letter notes the FDA decision was made without the advice of an independent advisory committee, which is required by FDA regulations on approving drugs.

The Senators wrote in their letter, "Today, there are 2.1 million Americans abusing or dependent on opioids. In addition, 44 people die every day as a result of a prescription opioid overdose. Abuse of opioid painkillers is also linked to abuse

of heroin, increased hepatitis C infection rates, increase in HIV transmission and a host of other negative public health outcomes. As we work to stop this crisis, the FDA's decision to approve the use of OxyContin in pediatric patients is a step in the wrong direction, as it may lead to an increase in inappropriate prescribing and use among a population that are already at a higher risk for developing dependency and addiction. "

A study from the National Institute on Drug Abuse found that in 2014, nearly 1 in 30 high school seniors had abused OxyContin. In 2009, the Massachusetts OxyContin and Heroin Commission found that in 2007 alone there were 4,544 substance abuse treatment admissions in Massachusetts for persons age 15 to 19. The commission noted the second most-common source for obtaining prescription opioids was through a physician.

"Each day, according to the American Society of Addiction Medicine, 2,500 youth in the United States abuse a prescription pain reliever for the first time," said DiZoglio. "The number of opioids prescribed to adolescents and young adults nearly doubled between 1994 and 2007. We in the Commonwealth have a duty to our children to regulate the distribution of an opioid like OxyContin to these vulnerable citizens"

In addition to this bill, DiZoglio earlier this year filed legislation to develop a model curriculum designed for the purpose of substance abuse and addiction prevention to be incorporated in the Commonwealth's health curriculum in grades 4 to 12. The Representative also recently secured $25,000 toward the Lawrence-Methuen Community Coalition's Merrimack Valley Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative.

A New Public Policy Response is Needed to Help Curb Homelessness

Joe D'Amore
GROVELAND SELECTMAN

If cities and towns define extreme poverty and homelessness as a public-health issue, the public-policy responses will be quite different than what we are used to today.

Consider that in all cases a homeless person, or someone who lives in extreme poverty, is marginal in most, if not all, categories of health: medical condition, physical and mental disabilities, clothing, personal hygiene, nutrition, shelter/ housing, addiction issues and access to clean drinking water.

Even though many homeless persons tend to live with or carry all their worldly possessions, it is amazing how much trash they generate for example. Yet in many cities and towns throughout the Merrimack Valley, trash pickup is non- existent and thereby a public-health threat is created.

It's all about attitudes and approach. Many municipal leaders have a bias towards "hiding the problem" in order to defend the image of their community, business investment and property values. But if they understood that those who are marginalized are also a vital part of the fabric of their communities, the scourge of homelessness would be eradicated.

There are many opportunities throughout the fiscal year in most communities to apply line-item transfers to address targeted public-health service costs, such as trash cleanup and outreach for a variety of interventions ranging from nutrition to medical. This is often a good interim step until more robust and permanent budget commitments are made to build outreach components to public health departments.

When this is combined with a coordinated effort through volunteers, service organizations, faith-based groups and advocates who are " on the ground" we will see results in addressing this issue adequately.

Joe D'Amore, writes from Groveland

PUNCHARD: FROM PAGE 5

first time, improve performance and help you on the road to health!

Energize with Exercise: Mondays until November 16. 3:30-4:30pm. $55. Fun aerobics and weight training workout. Instructor, Denise Boucher.

Zumba Toning: Thursdays until November 16. 3:30-4:30pm. $66. Instructor, Nancy Ryan. Combine weight training, cardio- fitness while you dance.

Serenity Yoga: Thursdays until November 12. 7:15-8:30pm. $60. Instructor, Sheila Wescott. Active practice of flowing postures with 15 minutes of meditation.

Belly Dancing: Thursdays until November 12, 6-7pm. $54. Bring out your "inner dancer"! Learn basic moves from fast and fiery to slow and smooth set to a fantastic mix of world music. Improve flexibility & self-confidence working all muscles, dance off calories, and have FUN! All body types & fitness levels will benefit.

Screening Room: Award-winning, independent film every Thursday, starting at 6:30 p.m.

AHMED: FROM PAGE 3

refused to sit in their assigned seats, requested seatbelt extenders they did not need and then began fanning out in the cabin in pairs as they began to occupy exit rows in the front, middle and back of the aircraft all the while talking about al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. Move along now, nothing to see here.

Most of the media bought in to the provided pre-written narrative as did President Obama who invited Ahmed to The White House, but the reality of the story is that we live in a zero tolerance world, especially inside schools. We've seen a boy suspended for making an imaginary bow and arrow with his fingers. Don't forget the child who was kicked out of school for saying bang. Oh, and the student who was expelled for chewing his Pop Tart in to the shape of a gun still has not received his Presidential invite. Ahmed's sister now admits that she was suspended from the same school three years ago for an alleged bomb threat. Perhaps President Obama will invite her for a visit as well.

No, this was not a case of profiling someone based on their faith. It was simply the story of an inventive but evasive teenager apparently prodded by an agenda driven father and emboldened by the professionally aggrieved who found all too willing accomplices in the media and political ranks.

Jeff Katz hosts an award winning daily talk show, heard from 3PM to 6PM on iheartradio and NEWSRADIO WRVA. You can listen to Jeff Katz any time you want by going to The Jeff Katz 24/7 Channel on the iheartradio app.You can follow him on twitter @jeffkatzshow and also at facebook.com/radiokatz

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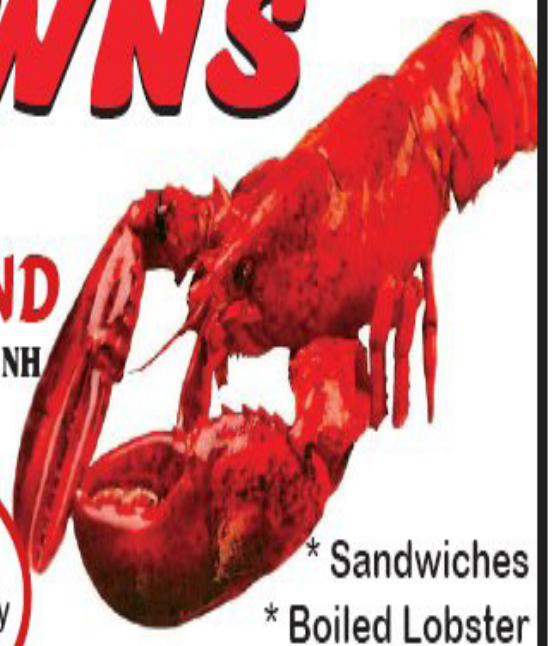

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Does Chuck Takesian Hold the Key to Salisbury's Sewer Problems?

IT'S NICE TO BE NICE... OR IS IT?

THE NICE GUY CANDIDATE

Salisbury Selectman Chuck Takesian is a nice guy, isn't he? Everybody loves Chuck. It's hard to find anyone with a bad word to say about him. When he dies people will give the old cliché that "everybody loved him, nobody had a bad word to say" but with Chuck it will probably be true.

Chuck is so nice that even a guy like me finds it hard to criticize his performance as a member of the Salisbury Board of Selectmen. But, I'm going to give it the old college try anyway.

You see, nice guy Chuck Takesian was asked while he was a candidate for selectmen what he would do if he found out if a town official had outright lied in court and would he have them removed. The question came at a candidate forum earlier this year where Takesian said... nicely of course ... that he would certainly do something about it and act to remove anyone involved in such things.

After all, what's a nice guy to do when faced with such scurrilous facts?

THE ELECTED NICE GUY

After Takesian was elected however, nice guy Chuck was asked at a Board of Selectmen meeting if he had received, and read the legal documents given to him by the Tomaselli sisters (who have been claiming fraud by the town for 20 years).

But, Chuck was too busy being nice (this time to his colleagues, not the voters) to read up on the allegations of fraud against his now colleagues, and admitted he hadn't looked into it at all.

Chuck had given his word as a man of honor to look into something (regardless of what it was) and then didn't do it. What do honorable people do when they find themselves in a position where they cannot keep their word? Well, an honorable person who is good for their word does something to make it right.

To not do so, would be ... not nice.

During this same meeting where Takesian admits he had not looked into the matter as he had promised, he also admitted a few things that were stunning. He said that

CHUCK TAKESIAN SMILING AS ALWAYS

he was involved in the 1989 sewer project and had voted on it despite the fact that "I was involved in later part of it, as you know we had a sewer commission. It was handed to the selectmen with very little documentation."

I mean, what's a "nice guy" to do? They handed him what he called a "mess" of documentation with no backup on a multi-million dollar sewer construction project and hey.... it wouldn't be nice to vote 'no' even though there's no documentation on the MILLIONS being spent, or where all that money was going.

I'd say that was really "nice" for the construction contractors, engineers and workers on the project, but not too nice for the Salisbury ratepayers who had to foot the $7.8M bill he voted for in 1992.

Takesian also admitted during that meeting, "I know the true cost of the project."

Really now? How is that possible if you have already admitted that you didn't have the documentation and that you never read the documents the Tomaselli sisters gave you from the EPA, USDA, court documents, and the state?

IS THIS VERY NICE?

The issue here is that the Tomaselli sisters have long maintained that the cost

SALISBURY: PAGE 31

NEWBURYPORTGUIDE.COM

"TREESCAPES" Photographs by Joan Kocak at Sweethaven Gallery

Rebeccah Pearson
VALLEY PATRIOT NEWBURYPORT COLUMNIST

"TREESCAPES" • Photographs by Joan Kocak at Sweethaven Gallery, will be showcased starting October 24th through November 22nd. The opening reception will be on Saturday Novebmer 7th from 12pm – 5pm, and the Artist, Ms. Kocak, will be in the gallery to answer questions about her work. Light refreshments will be served. Please visit our gallery during gallery hours Wednesday, Friday and Sundays 12pm – 5pm and Saturdays 10am – 5pm.

A former graphic designer turned photographer, Joan Kocak's fine art prints are exhibited in galleries in New England, as well as the Center for Fine Art Photography in Fort Collins, CO, and have been published in numerous photography magazines. Enchanted with all forms of photography; analog, digital, alternative process, toy cameras, Polaroid and her dad's old Ikoflex, she enjoys experimenting with them all. A native of the Northeast, her images are infused with a deep connection to the land and water of the area. "The locations where this series 'TREESCAPES' were shot have great significance for me, and remind me of specific people in my life, both here and gone. These images are meant to convey a sense of aloneness and quiet reverie. They were shot in beloved forests and woodlands and attempt to capture the stark simplicity of trees, their grace and wisdom. Trees seem to harbor the great secrets of life; they offer a soothing knowingness just walking amongst them. I'm particularly fond of shooting in fog, and many of these images were shrouded in it." In this series, a process of subtly combining layers of photographs of previously shot textures (such as dirty snow, peeling paint and cracked pavement) was used to add a painterly feeling to the original photograph. They are printed on Hahnemuhle German Etching papers, a heavy archival paper that has somewhat of a traditional watercolor paper look. Each work is a signed and numbered limited edition of 50. For more images visit: www.joankocakphotography.com

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HOMEWORK IS LIKE A SCARY MOVIE: FUN IF SOMEONE'S WITH YOU

DEEB: FROM PAGE 14

graduation rate, and deal more effectively with student discipline problems. To address these issues, we need to: (1) Attract and retain quality teachers and administrators; (2) Reduce class sizes; (3) Expand remediation programs for at-risk students; (4) Increase Professional Development opportunities for teachers and support staff; and (5) Provide more instructional materials and technology.

I will continue to work to ensure accountability, promote cooperation between city officials and the school department, and look to attract and retain quality teachers and administrators. Let's work together, develop a plan, and make sure that we are providing the best opportunities we can for our students.

I want to make sure that the children of Methuen get a quality education at a price that taxpayers can afford. I will balance the needs of students, taxpayers, and parents at Methuen Public Schools.

Please make sure you vote on Tuesday, November 3rd and spread the word to family/friends I ask for your vote for D.J. DEEB for Methuen School Committee on Tuesday, November 3rd. Thank you.

D.J. Deeb is a Methuen resident and member of the Methuen School Committee. Deeb is an Adjunct Professor of History/Government at Bunker Hill Community College and an Adjunct Political Science Instructor at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He teaches Social Studies full-time at Reading Memorial High School. He is the author of Israel, Palestine, and the Quest for Middle East Peace (University Press, 2013) and The Collapse of Middle East Peace (IUniverse, 2003).

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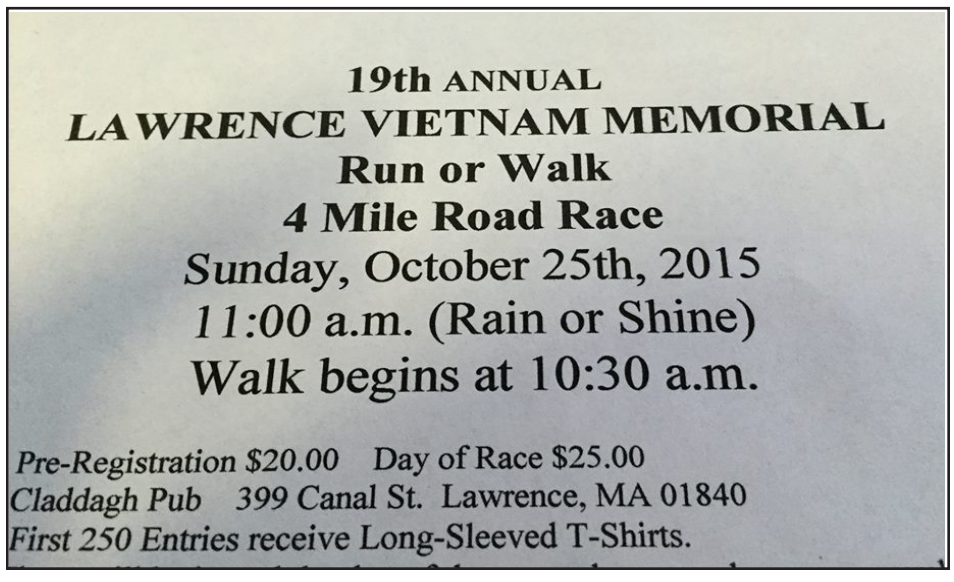
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SHEILA'S RECIPE CORNER

SHEILA MULLINS
VALLEY PATRIOT RECIPE COLUMNIST

Fall is setting in & the need for easy to prepare meals to have on the table is necessary. The pork loin one is a fast one, is easy, yet the presentation is nice enough to serve for a dinner with company. The chicken & vegetable one is something one can make in advance & simply cook up at the last minute as a snack or as a dinner. So, give them both a try & let me know what you think.

Pork Loin with Grape Mostarda

I had first run into mostardas late last fall & was shocked that I'd never heard of them before. Boy! They give a simple roast quite the amping up in the flavour department & they are generally fairly simple to prepare, as is this one.

1-3-3.5 lb pork loin
Salt & pepper
Garlic powder
3 c seedless red grapes cut into quarters
3 T mustard
2 T chopped fresh rosemary
Juice from 1 lemon

Season the pork loin with the salt, pepper, & garlic powder. Roast in a 350°F oven for 1.25 hours or until internal temperature reaches 155°F.Remove from oven & tent with aluminum foil & a clean dish towel for 20 minutes. Leave to rest.

While the pork is resting, into a saucepan, place all the rest of ingredients, & season with salt & pepper. Turn stove onto medium high heat & then reduce to medium. Cover & heat through, stirring occasionally, until grapes are softened, about 7-10 minutes.

Serve mostarda on top of pork. Serves 6-8.

Zucchini Fritters & dipping sauce

¾ c finely ground chicken*
1 smaller zucchini, grated
1 med-large carrot, grated
½ onion
1 serrano chili, seeded
1 large garlic clove
1 t ground ginger
¾ t chili powder
1 T ground cumin
1 T lemon juice
2 t garam masala or curry powder
½ cup chick pea flour (besan) or brown rice flour
1/3 c chopped roasted cashews
Salt
¼ c Vegetable oil

Dipping Sauce:

¼ c Greek or regular yogurt
2 T Dijon mustard
1 T lemon or lime juice
Salt & pepper

Place the grated zucchini in a towel, wrap up, & wring out all the excess moisture you can.

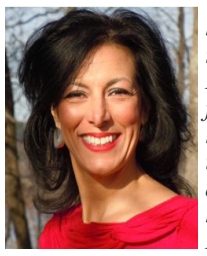
In a food processor, place all seasonings & onion & garlic. Process until finely chopped. Add the rest of the ingredients & process until mixed.

Place into a preheated frying pan over medium high heat, 2 T oil & coat pan well. Gently drop into hot pan dollops of the mixture & fry until browned on bottom, about 3 minutes. Turn heat to medium. Turn over the fritters & cook until browned on bottom, about 3-4 minutes. Repeat until batter is used up.

If you need to, you can keep the fritters hot in a warm oven on a paper towel lined plate until all are ready for serving.

Dipping Sauce: Mix all ingredients in a bowl & serve. Serves 2.

* It is easy to take chicken breast, thighs, or combination thereof & chop finely in the food processor.



All recipes are created by Sheila Mullins & taste tested by Jerry & Sheila Mullins & sometimes friends & family. Sheila lives in Newburyport & is an interior designer & a personal cook. She can be reached at Sheila_A_Mullins@hotmail.com & she looks forward to hearing from you.

TV TALK WITH BILL CUSHING

Horror On TV These Days Is Scary Good

Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

If you're a fan of scary things, love a good scary movie or a scary book to read, you're not alone. Horror is a very popular genre these days, especially in the month of October and TV has taken notice. For decades, horror was the thing you were least likely to see on your TV. It came and went, occasionally with success, but more often it disappeared quickly. Shows like Buffy The Vampire Slayer, True Blood, Twin Peaks, and The X-Files were very successful series; but they were few and far between. However over the last few years there has been a huge influx of television shows in the horror genre, proving that the powers that be on TV are realizing that horror doesn't always mean that it can't also be a good high quality show.

The first show to really get the ball rolling and made people stand up and take notice was AMC's The Walking Dead. Premiering in 2010, it was an extremely gory horror show about the zombie apocalypse that not only became very popular; it became the highest rated cable television show in TV history. The Walking Dead, based on a comic book series, set ratings records on a regular basis. It even spawned a spin-off series, Fear The Walking Dead.

With the unprecedented success of The Walking Dead, other networks started to take notice and the horror genre took off.

Since then virtually every major network has dipped their toes into the horror waters. FX has had shows like American Horror Story and The Strain, both critically acclaimed and very popular among fans. In 2013, NBC premiered Hannibal, based on Hannibal Lecter from Silence of The Lambs. CBS had a pretty successful run with Stephen King's Under The Dome. FOX had Sleepy Hollow in 2013. Showtime has Penny Dreadful. The CW has The Vampire Diaries, iZombie, and Supernatural. Netflix got into the game with Hemlock Grove. A&E has had success with Bates Motel, based on the teenage years of Psycho's Norman Bates. This year alone, MTV premiered Scream, based on the popular film series, and FOX has Scream Queens. FOX has also announced that a revival of The X-Files will return in January and Showtime will revive Twin Peaks next year.

The horror genre has appeared to become a staple in today's TV landscape, and it appears as though it is here to stay. There are also many horror shows in development for the coming year, including a series based on the Friday the 13th film series, and Starz will be bringing a series based on The Evil Dead film series to its network later this year. Horror authors Clive Barker (Hellraiser), and the aforementioned Stephen King have shows in development, as does popular horror filmmaker Rob Zombie.

Horror is no longer the genre that was a guilty pleasure. Horror fans no longer have to be afraid to admit that they love horror films and shows. Recent projects like the ones mentioned in this column have proven that horror can be high quality and successful if done right.

Happy Halloween everyone!

Do you have any questions about TV? Email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future column.

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Some are more equal than others

Bharani Padmanabhan, MD, PhD
MEDICAL CORRUPTION COLUMNIST

This past week came the news, sadly expected, that Dennis Hastert will be allowed to plead to a lesser charge and the Government will bend over backwards to avoid talking about the child abuse he was paying someone off to keep quiet about.

How much the Government bent over is extraordinary, even by Government standards, for letting the elite skate on charges ordinary people get nailed and jailed for.

The Government let Hastert's defense attorney write the terms of the plea bargain. That is how much the Government bent over.

Here in Massachusetts at exactly the same time, US Attorney Carmen Ortiz quietly released news of a "settlement agreement" she signed with Mass General Hospital.

Ortiz's press release states she signed that settlement with only MGH, mind you, and not with Partners Healthcare. Clear?

And what was the $2.3 Million settlement all about? MGH let its nurses steal 24,000 oxycodone pills over years and let other nurses steal liquid dilaudid every day for years with zero oversight and no systems in place.

The settlement claims the nurses stole all the medicines for their own drug abuse.

Because the MGH nurses' names are absent from the settlement agreement, we don't know if they really stole all the pills for their own abuse or sold a chunk outside a school. We are supposed to take Ortiz's word for it.

The settlement also mentions, in passing, "An MGH physician, E.P., repeatedly prescribed controlled substances for patients without seeing them and without maintaining medical records, in 2012-2013."

I don't know about you but I certainly haven't heard about this MGH physician from the state Board of Medicine. And I am someone who pays attention to this sort of news. And we certainly haven't heard about this MGH physician from the free press of Massachusetts. Why wasn't the Globe or WBZ4 camped outside his/her house?

The settlement itself provides a clue to explain this studied silence - "MGH is the largest hospital in Massachusetts, the largest teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, and a biomedical research facility."

OK then. We should all keep quiet because if we make MGH and Partners look bad it could hurt jobs. You know, like going after big banks.

Which brings us to this other pearl in the settlement.

In exchange for MGH paying the Government off with $2.3 Million, the Government releases not only MGH, but also all of "Partners Healthcare System, Inc. ("Partners"), and their assigns, successors, principals, management, officers, directors, agents, and employees, from any civil or administrative claims the United States has, could have, or may assert in the future related to the Covered Conduct under the Act."

Wait, all of Partners too? Without them even copping to anything? Sweet!

Remember, Ortiz's press release does not mention Partners even once.

A tough Governor would have immediately demanded the full name of the doctors and nurses involved and demanded from the state Boards of Medicine and Nursing a public accounting of what action was taken to keep them away from the people of Massachusetts.

Then again, given that Governor Baker's team from Lon Povich on down have proved that they do not have the spine to correct blatantly unlawful behavior by even salaried Board employees, nothing better may be expected.

Heads still have not rolled after I proved the Board of Medicine protected a bad doctor who lied on his license renewal application, so don't hold your breath. After all, that doctor, Barry Levin, works for Partners Healthcare too.

Some are more equal than others.

Bharani Padmanabhan MD PhD is a neurologist who specialises in multiple sclerosis in the Boston area. scleroplex@gmail.com

THE DOCTOR IS IN!

Don't Shoot the Messenger

Dr. Frank MacMillan, MD
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

One of the most difficult jobs I have has been the honor of being tasked with giving bad news. It is both dreadful and an honor. It is dreadful because we all know that in ancient times, bad news given to the emperor was likely to result in the separation of the bearer of bad news and his head. In modern times, the same fear has resulted in the invention of the "yes men," people who tell the boss what he wants to hear.

Since I don't have a boss, other than the patient who hires me to advise them on and manage their health problems, I have a duty to my patients to tell them the truth about what they are facing and provide options and choices for them to act upon. I do my patient no service by being a yes man, or sugar coating bad news to protect myself from the painful experience of delivering bad news.

I bring this up because I have had the painful honor of delivering bad news to people I care about recently, more times than I care to mention. This is not a skill that someone has from an early age. It is something that is developed over time, sometimes doing it well, and sometimes not so well. I can only say that the only thing that gets me through it is to be both honest and sincere.

As I get older myself, and reflect on my own mortality, I find it hard not to connect the pain and suffering of others to my own fears and anxieties. I had a conversation with a dear friend who pointed out that once we are over 50, "we are out of our warranty, and every day of good health is a gift." While I am not sure that any of us ever had such a warranty, the expectation that we have a limitless future hits a wall whenever I have to give bad news to a friend, a patient, a colleague.

I call it an honor because someone has to do it, and I hope that I can do it well with compassion, love, and sensitivity. I also hope that I can do it with empathy and with a sense of helping to find an imaginative way of moving forward to somewhere or someplace that may have not been seen initially. As I struggle with the dread of having to tell someone that something may not be quite right, I am heartened that I have given the power to these individuals to take control of their future by acting on the best information and an honest appraisal of what they are up against, and an optimistic creativity in presenting other possibilities they may not have yet imagined.

Dr. MacMillan specializes in Gastroenterology and Liver disease and is a member of the North Andover Board of Health. Dr. Macmillan was recently elected by his peers to be vice Speaker of the House of Delegates at the Massachusetts Medical Society and alternate Delegate from Massachusetts to the American Medical Association. Dr. MacMillan is on staff at Holy Family Hospital Haverhill and Methuen, Anna Jaques Hospital in Newburyport, Lawrence General Hospital, and Parkland Hospital in Derry, NH and is the President of the Massachusetts Gastroenterology Association. Dr. MacMillan also serves as Massachusetts Governor of the American College of Gastroenterology and is a Fellow of the College.

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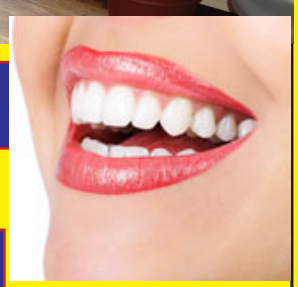
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To the Editor:

Chances are you or someone you know has heart failure, often called congestive heart failure or CHF. It's one of the most common reasons people age 65 and older go to the hospital and the 2nd leading cause of death in both Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Living with this condition isn't simple. But, it's something that many people have learned to do, and Home Health VNA can help. "Caring for Your Heart: Living Well with Heart Failure" is a free guide available on our website at www.HomeHealthVNA.org/patient-resources or by phone at 978-552-4186. This guide helps people understand heart failure and describes diet, exercise and other strategies to reduce symptoms. It is also used by our nurses as a teaching tool for patients with heart failure who are admitted to the new Hearts at Home program of Home Health VNA.

With the right information, careful planning and regular medical care you can manage heart failure symptoms for a better quality of life. Make today the day you begin.

Karen Gomes, RN, MS, CPHQ
Vice President of Clinical Services Home Health VNA, Chief Clinical Officer, Home Health Foundation

Ye Gay Ol' Valley

Where Are All the Gods?

Dani B. Langiven
VALLEY PATRIOT LESBIAN COLUMNIST

I think everyone would agree that the world can be an ugly place. Not a day goes by that the media doesn't inundate us with stories of horrific acts of violence. The worst part of it is, that mankind on mankind commits these acts of violence. Isis is beheading anyone who they see as a threat to their extremist views of Islam. Hungary is turning away thousands of Syrians trying to escape war. Those they don't turn away are treated like criminals. The media is falsely spinning white cop violence on the black community. Cars are being shot from overpasses and children are showing up dead on beaches.

What is going on? Why do we treat each other so poorly? And where are all the gods? Where is the Christian God? Where is Jesus, Allah, Buddha, and the thousands of Hindu gods? Why are none of them stepping in and saying, "Enough". The old and new testaments are riddled with stories and parables about God reaching out to His earthly children reminding them how to behave. Why haven't we heard from Him in over 2,000 years?

In reality, gods were created by the human race to make us feel better about our miserable lives. In the beginning they were created to explain nature. There were many gods: a god to make the sun rise, another to make it set, bring rain, wind, and so on. There were gods that brought sickness and others who brought health. Before real scientific theory, study, and discovery, gods were used to explain away every natural phenomenon. They were manmade.

Then Jesus came and claimed he was the Son of God. He risked his life in the Roman Empire by running his mouth and saying that, "Yes, the Roman Kingdom is great and the Roman Emperor is powerful, but there is a greater kingdom, the kingdom of heaven and your emperor is not a god, (a belief held by Romans for thousands of years). There is only one God and that is the Lord your God who resides in heaven and he sees all of mankind as equal. He loves you and if you accept him into your heart, you will be saved immediately." Who wouldn't want to be saved right away in a kingdom that enslaved just about everyone? And in a symbol of complete self-sacrifice and martyrdom, Jesus was crucified and those who call themselves Christians believe he rose from the dead, proving his God-like status and ascended into heaven. Where has he been since then?

Over the years we have seen many people claim that they have some sort of knowledge of unworldly and God-like forces: Jim Jones of Jonestown, David Koresh of the Branch Davidians, and Marshal Applewhite and Bonnie Nettles of Heaven's Gate to name a few. They had a number of people believing that they were a part of something greater than themselves as a singular human being.

I get that. I get wanting to be a part of something bigger than my singular self, but I don't believe in gods or one god. Their existence is simply in the minds of men and men make God or gods too small and too human. I do believe in something greater than a singular person. I believe in mankind. We, collectively are greater than any god we he have created to explain our existence. Think about that. We spend so much time wasting our energies to fight one another, beating our chests, and screaming our rebel yells. Imagine what we could accomplish as a human race if we pooled the energy, strength, knowledge and love of over three hundred million people. We would be more invincible and more heavenly than any god we have tried to envision or create in our own minds. We need to worship our abilities as a human race to rise above our earthly burdens. I believe in mankind. Leave the gods to the heavens.

Dani Langevin is a teacher and has a Bachelors in Fine Art and Masters in Education. She has written four young adult novels, one of which is self-published. You can email Dani at DaniBLangevin@aol.com

Beneath the Surface

The Fascinating Francis Phenomenon

Paul Murano
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

A very unexpected thing happened throughout the media and in the nation last week. We were inundated with all things pope. There was non-stop coverage of the papal visit on cable and network stations, even from those that normally spend their time criticizing and ridiculing the Catholic Church and her teachings. Anchors were acting like schoolgirls with a crush as they collectively gushed over Pope Francis - including those from the network otherwise devoted to being the enemy of truth and goodness, MSNBC. Very fascinating.

No other religious or secular leader gets this kind of attention. Since Catholicism is a minority religion in America, why do so many non-Catholics love this pope? And why do so many 'cafeteria' Catholics and 'nominal' Catholics love him? Let us go beneath the surface to get a handle on the Francis phenomenon.

It seems this love affair began with the infamous words, "Who am I to judge them?", which supposedly set a tone for this papacy. At least that's what the media told us. Francis was answering a direct question about priests who may have a propensity to same-sex attraction but who seek to follow God and His will. The pope simply repeated the biblical imperative which is the constant teaching of the Church: We are called to judge acts, not persons. Discerning good and evil behavior is our job, but judging the guilt and state of soul of a person is God's. Only He knows the level of knowledge and consent one has when choosing an act. Nevertheless, it was perceived as a crack in the door for many who are usually on the sidelines, to proclaim this pope as their own. And this begs the question: Why is it so important for non-Catholics and 'bad' Catholics to gain approval from the pope?

Every pope, like every person, has a unique personality and approach to his work. Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:17); and in referring to the lost sheep He said, "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance" (Luke 15:7). Pope Francis loves with Christ's love and seeks healing and wholeness for all, especially the poor and the lost.

The truth of Church doctrine, especially in matters of sex, life, and the family, can be a stumbling block for two groups of people - the weak and the stubborn. Both groups find peace and hope in the love of God that Francis reflects, because, like sunlight to a flower, it is built into our nature. However, the stubborn hate the truth, while the weak simply feel powerless. This is an important distinction. The stubborn angrily refuse to sacrifice the lifestyle choices of their disordered desires, but the weak are only discouraged by a feeling of futility. It makes sense that the stubborn were completely disillusioned after hearing Pope Francis visited Kim Davis to encourage her to follow her conscience in saying yes to God rather than men. The weak, however, unlike the stubborn, see such encouragement as a good thing. The stubborn who gushed all over the pope while he was here will undoubtedly continue their bashing the Catholic Church for not giving in to their desires, but the weak have no such malice and remain open to God. Francis is the pope of the weak, and that includes all of us to varying degrees. As St. Francis of Assisi once said, the pope's namesake: "We are all poor in the eyes of the Lord." Pope Francis represents Christ's utmost concern for His poor lost sheep.

Every human being knows deep inside they need love, validation and affirmation; but only the wise seem to know they need forgiveness and strength. Only the wise bow before God rather than demanding He bow before us. Pope Francis knows the poor and the weak have this humble heart and he will not rest until all the sheep have made their way back to the Good Shepherd.

The surprising response to the pope's visit in our minority Catholic country makes it clear that people of all faiths recognize the pope - whose titles include the Successor of St. Peter, the Servant of the Servants of God, and the Vicar of Christ on earth - as a unique instrument of God's truth and love to the world. Were some of us frustrated that the pope did not speak more pointedly to Congress about the evils that have become legal in our nation? Absolutely. But, as Francis knows well, one cannot appreciate God's truth or even love one's self without first knowing God's love. Pope Francis is speaking specifically to those who involuntarily find the beauty of Truth to be a stumbling block to receiving God's love. It is impossible to support the choice to kill unborn children or to desecrate natural marriage in any way after truly encountering the God of love.

Pope Francis reflects Christ in telling us what he stated in that original papal interview that allegedly "set the tone" for his papacy: If you are sincerely seeking God and His will and are open to his grace, then who am I to judge you?

Paul Murano teaches philosophy at North Shore Community College and Rivier University; and Adult catechesis at St. Patrick's parish in Nashua. He is host of Beneath the Surface on WCAP radio Mondays 10-11pm, is on the board of Heartbeat Pregnancy Help center in Burlington, and is a singer-songwriter-musician. E-mail Paul at PJDM@aol.com

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Stopping Addiction Before It Starts

IN YOUR CORNER WITH SENATOR KATY IVES

The State Senate recently passed additional reforms aimed at combatting the substance abuse epidemic in Massachusetts. Senate Bill 2020, which passed unanimously, focuses on prevention and early intervention, responsible pain management, expanded drug take-back programs by manufacturers, and reducing the number of opiate pills in circulation by working with doctors, insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, and pharmacists.

This bill aims to curb the reliance on powerful opiate pain medication, in favor of lower risk alternatives. Included in this effort are provisions tasking the Drug Formulary Commission with identifying drugs that have a high potential for abuse, requiring prescribers to inform patients of their option to partially fill their pain medication prescription, and creating a Pain Management Commission to establish a specialty certification for providers with expertise in pain relief.

I filed a successful amendment that adds a representative from the Massachusetts Chiropractic Society to the Pain Management Commission because I know many of my constituents and people throughout the Commonwealth already rely on chiropractic services as an alternative to pain medication.

The Senate also included language for which I strongly advocated that encourages physicians to discuss with their patients the side effects and risks of the medication they prescribe. Many people do not understand the inherent dangers associated with taking any kind of narcotic pain medication. Physicians should fully disclose these risks as part of a responsible prescribing strategy.

Additionally, the Senate adopted SBIRT Screenings (Screen, Brief , Intervention, Referral to Treatment) for public school students, in an effort to prevent youth addiction before it develops. These screenings would be conducted annually, similar to existing vision and hearing tests, and consist of nine yes-or-no questions designed to identify substance abuse behaviors. By asking questions and not drug testing, SBIRT encourages students to have conversations with school nurses or other trained support staff about making healthy choices and avoiding drug and alcohol use. Parents would receive notification before SBIRT, and they and their children have the opportunity to opt out of participating. Gloucester, Hadley, Hudson, Natick, North Andover, Northampton, and Wilmington already utilize SBIRT.

Although an amendment I offered which would have allowed school districts to choose whether or not to participate in the program did not pass, I will continue to advocate for fully funding any substance abuse prevention programs in schools. Fortunately, the Senate also voted to end the screening requirement should appropriations not be made available for its implementation.

The bill now moves to the State House of Representatives for their consideration before becoming law.

Senator O'Connor Ives can be reached at KATHLEEN.OCONNORIVES@MASENATE.GOV

Organic Foods: Not as Healthy as You Think

Christine Morabito
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Organic farming has become a multi-billion-dollar industry. What you don't know about it may surprise you.

Eating organic is supposed to be healthier and better for the environment. However, there is a serious lack of evidence that either of these things is true. It seems our food purchases are more about perception than reality.

Far from being nutritionally superior, organic foods may pose a greater health risk than traditionally grown foods. In 2012, 33 people from 5 states were infected with the bacteria, E. coli. Thirteen people were hospitalized. Two developed kidney failure. The source: Wegmans brand Organic Spinach & Spring Mix. Organic eggs, peanut products, packaged seasonings and other foods have been recalled after salmonella outbreaks.

While contamination is possible with any food, bacterial risk seems to be greater in organic produce because their major source of fertilizer is manure, as opposed to synthetic fertilizers. To render it safe, manure must be "aged" properly - 130 degrees F. for about two months. Dennis Avery, director of the Center for Global Food Issues at the Hudson Institute, writes in his piece, "The Hidden Dangers in Organic Food," the problem is compounded by their resistance to using traditional chemicals or irradiation to kill the dangerous bacteria.

How can this be? Organic farming is regulated, right?

After the passing of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, the National Organic Program was given authority to monitor all U.S. agricultural products (animal and vegetable) marked "organic." According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, (USDA) organic farmers pay a certification fee ranging, from a few hundred to several thousand dollars.

The growers must then hire a regulator to inspect them. Anyone see a problem with that? As you can imagine, enforcement is far from stellar. As Mischa Popoff, a former organic farm inspector, documented in his book, "Is it Organic?" the system is honor based, with inspections consisting of interviews with farmers and examining paperwork claiming the producer has followed the rules. Surprisingly, there are no inspections of the crops themselves. Efforts to do so have met fierce opposition. This lack of transparency was a red flag to Popoff that the system is terribly flawed.

Michael Potter, founder of organic Eden Foods, says this system "invites and encourages fraud." He refuses to use the USDA "certified organic" seal on his products.

In 2014, the Organic Program's budget was increased by 40 percent, much of which was earmarked for enforcement. As with most government programs, throwing money at a problem rarely helps.

It is a myth that buying organic means supporting small farms. Kellogg, General Mills, Kraft, Coca-Cola, Wal-Mart, ConAgra and others have jumped on board in a big way. One of President Obama's first appointments was Michael Taylor as senior advisor to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Ready for this? Taylor is a former vice-president and lobbyist for Monsanto - the green movement's nemesis.

The organic industry claims to use only natural techniques to enhance the soil and protect crops. Even if this were true, it begs the question: Since when is the word "natural" synonymous with safe? Many natural substances are harmful, even poisonous to humans. Natural pesticides are no better for the environment. They tend to be less species specific, meaning they unintentionally kill "good" insects like predatory bugs, butterflies and bees.

The risk from eating traditionally grown food is not that we ingest chemicals, per say, but the residue from those substances. There's a big difference. When testing is done with laboratory rats - which have an entirely different anatomy from ours - they receive significantly higher doses than any human would ever ingest. As a result, many substances have been unfairly deemed harmful or carcinogenic to humans, when, in truth, the poison is in the dosage.

When buying organic products from overseas, all bets are off - especially those imported from countries ripe with corruption. Whole Foods sparked outrage when it was discovered they were selling so called "organic" produce from China.

Patrick Moore, co-founder of Greenpeace sees no net benefit from organics. In his book, "Confessions of a Greenpeace Dropout," he writes, "The word organic as it is used in organic farming, is not a scientific or technically meaningful term." Organic producers are allowed to use a myriad of inorganic substances (like ethanol and iodine). The list of synthetic chemicals they are allowed to use is longer than the list they can't.

While organic growers like to demonize everything synthetic, they have no problem using man-made painkillers or synthetic micronutrients, like zinc, copper, iron and others. They denounce hormones, yet are allowed to use the hormone, oxytocin.

Moore says some environmentalists have an irrational fear of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Since man first began growing his own food it has been "engineered." Through selective breeding for desirable traits, virtually everything we eat has been altered from its original form. Most of our produce; even chickens and cows no longer resemble their wild ancestors.

Due to its low productivity, organic farming requires that more land be cleared in order to grow the same amount of food. Dennis Avery says if we switched to organic farming, we would have to cut down 10 million square miles of forest.

We are able to conserve the remaining wild places, in part, because of the miracles of modern farming. By altering plant genetics we are able to increase yield, use fewer chemicals and feed millions more people on less land. Science writer Christie Wilcox, said it best, "New technology isn't the enemy of organic farming; it should be its strongest ally."

Christine Morabito is a psychiatric nurse, a resident of Haverhill, president of Protect Our Vote New England. You can email Christine christine.morabito@hotmail.com

BABIES AND BRIEFCASES

HELPING YOUR CHILDREN AFTER DIVORCE

Cheryl Hajjar
VALLEY PATRIOT MOMMY COLUMNIST

Healing after a divorce is a long process and never easy but it begins with you. Children can emotionally heal from a divorce if you can stabilize yourself first. One of the worst things you can do is let your children see your pure emotions as you recover from the divorce yourself. Often times, children will feel a greater impact if they see how upset their parents are by the separation. This can ultimately lead to resentment, or poisoning as I like to call it. Here are some suggestions to help both yourself and your children heal.

SEEK COUNSELING. Get your head around the fact that you are divorcing. It may take many months for a divorce to finally feel real. Work through your resentment of why the relationship didn't work out and find a way to come to terms with it. If you can do this first, the separation will be much easier on the children.

MAKE SLOW CHANGES. Your whole family dynamic has been abruptly altered so make your new changes slowly. The normal sounds and sights of home, family members and friends may be gone, so it is going to be difficult to adjust for everyone. Making small changes one at a time will be easier to manage for them.

LET YOUR CHILD LOVE THE OTHER PARENT. This is probably the most important thing you can do. A child shouldn't have to pick sides, or love one parent any less just because there is a separation. Many parents don't understand this and it really is a tragedy. Pitting your child against the other parent just because you are hurt is extremely damaging, quite childish and downright selfish. Be a good parent and let them have a relationship with them. Your children will only resent you in the long run, so be smart.

DON'T BADMOUTH YOUR EX. Its time to grow up now, you're an adult and most importantly, you have a responsibility to your children to help them heal through this difficult time. You have to find a way to put aside your ill feelings about your ex to help your children. Your children do not want to hear bad things about a parent. Remember, when they were living in the house, they had a relationship with them. You can't just expect your kids to turn on the parent because of a separation.

ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS. It is natural for the children to feel sad after a divorce but they do not know that those are normal feelings to have. Reinforce them that it is ok to feel down about it. Trying to be a cheerleader everyday is just annoying so stop that right behavior. Your children have to learn how to cope with the new changes and by allowing them to express their feelings will help them cope through the pain faster.

ADOPT A PET. Adding a new pet after some time can always add new joy for the new family situation. Also giving your child certain responsibilities of caring for the pet will take their mind off of the divorce. A puppy is always a great way to bond as a family.

ZERO RECONCILIATION. Let the children know that there is zero chance of a reconciliation for you and Dad or Mom. Most children fantasize about their parents getting back together after a divorce so being crystal clear about the relationship status will be definitive and helpful for them. The sooner they start the process of adjusting to a new life, the easier each day will get for them.

IT'S NOT THEIR FAULT. Many children feel that the divorce is their fault. This fact must be constantly reinforced. Many children will think, oh if I only picked up my room, or behaved better, my parents wouldn't be divorcing. Be sure

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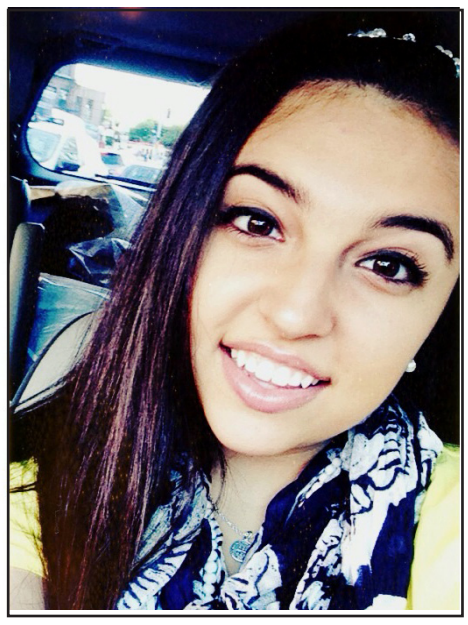
TEEN TALK WITH ANA DEBERNARDO

A Student's Recipe for Success



On my first day of high school, I remember imagining graduation day and realizing it would be eons before a then new, freshman inmate would become a liberated senior who had paid her dues.

I now sit writing this article in my senior bioethics class with all of my senior friends, and I cannot help but feel somewhat forlorn. Because we are a Catholic school, Bioethics is one of the core classes in every senior's schedule. As is natural with all controversial topics, heated debates ensue whenever a new subject is introduced. It's interesting to see a room full of opinionated teenagers pitted against, both their fellow classmates and their teacher. One of the best parts about taking this particular class during our final year is that with the past three years behind us, everyone has had the chance to get to know each other, and therefore all the initial cordialities of classroom conversation have been forgotten.

This past week, a subject arose in class that was especially thought provoking. In explaining the process of In Vitro Fertilization, my teacher mentioned that "In Vitro" literally means "in glass." Meaning that a woman's eggs are collected and placed in a glass test-tube where they are fertilized in a laboratory and later placed inside her womb. For the most part, my classmates and I were fairly familiar with the basic steps of the process. However many of us were unaware of the inevitable abortions that almost always proceeded a successful IVF session. Since the objective of the treatment is to make sure the woman becomes pregnant, several fertilized eggs are placed into her womb to see which has the likeliest possibility of surviving. The majority of the time however, multiple eggs survive and as a result, the "unwanted" babies are aborted.

Having already written a couple of articles regarding my pro-life stance, I don't feel it necessary to reiterate my feelings towards that subject. Nevertheless, the practice of IVF brings up many new points of discussion beyond just abortion. In some cases, not all of the eggs fertilized "in vitro" are returned to the woman's womb. Those that remain are frozen and then offered up for adoption.

This in and of itself creates an entirely new tier of problems. For starters, there already exists an immensely long waiting list to adopt babies in this country. Most recent studies have shown that there are 397,122 children in the foster care system that are living without permanent families. With a number that big, it's easy to wonder how couples could be on year-long waiting lists when nearly 102,000 of these kids are eligible for adoption.

Of that number, 32% will wait more than 3 years in foster care before being adopted. The problem is that most couples that choose to adopt do so because they cannot have children of their own (for whatever reason that may be - biological, physical, etc.). In these cases, it is common for a couple to want to adopt a baby to raise from infancy as if he or she was their own biological child. While of course adoption is a beautiful thing, this steady desire for babies over both toddlers and grown children, augments the problem that thousands of foster care children face. Each year 250,000 new babies are placed in the adoption pool. In most cases those are 250,000 babies that essentially decrease the hopes of an older child to be adopted. Of the 390,000+ children in foster care, almost 200,000 range in age from 6-21.

Imagine being a teenager in foster care who has known nothing more than to live in a state of constant movement, hoping that one day, his temporary house will become a permanent home. People are constantly arguing over the "real problem with this country." But the truth is this:

TEEN: PAGE 28

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Headlines Handled Differently

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

I have been pondering and considering the many issues that have made headlines that as a Christian I find myself at times at odds with. My purpose here in this column is not to pass judgment on anyone but to offer as a Christian a different approach to handling issues that seemingly may conflict with scripture.

To do this I would like to bring your attention to a story in the Bible found in the book of 2 Kings 5: 1-19. It is the account of Naaman, Captain of the Host of the King of Syria, a great man with his master. (Naaman was the 2nd in command to the most powerful military in the world at the time). Honourable, because by him the Lord gave deliverance unto Syria and he was a great man in Valour. Naaman had all this going for him but after all these wonderful credentials and accolades, the scripture goes on to say at the end of verse one, "but he was a leper." This meant that Naaman knew that eventually his leprosy would kill him! He had a disease that came with a sentence of death!

But Naaman's wife just so happened to have an Israeli servant who waited on her and said to her mistress, "would God my lord" (referring to Naaman), "were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy."

This information eventually got to Naaman and the news was so big that the King of Syria got involved and told Naaman to go to the King of Israel!

Hold on a minute! Is that what the little servant girl of Naaman's wife said to do? No it wasn't, there was a tremendous difference between the King of Israel and the Prophet Elisha who was a Samaria! See what happens when Politicians gets involved? Naaman shows up at the King of Israel's Palace with a letter from the King of Syria and a big argument between Kings begins all because of politics. But, to save time and space, I'll just jump ahead to when Naaman eventually ends up at Elisha's front gate.

Once Elisha hears that Naaman is outside his door he sends a messenger to Naaman who tells Naaman, "to go and wash in the Jordon seven times and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." This makes Naaman very mad! First Naaman because of who he was thought that Elisha should have at least come to meet him and secondly Elisha should have told him to do something greater than to wash in the Jordon because the waters of Jordon were filthy! So as the scripture says, "Naaman went away in a rage". But as he went away, he went away a mad leper!

After sometime passes, Naaman's servant says to him, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, wash and be clean?" Then Naaman went down to the Jordon and dipped himself seven times according to the saying of the man of God and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child and he was clean! Then he returned to the man of God and stood before him and said, "Behold now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel: now therefore I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant." Naaman wanted to show his appreciation for what took place and give a gift to the man of God, Elisha. But Elisha would not accept a gift.

After many attempts of offering a gift to Elisha and he refusing them all, Naaman says this to Elisha, "In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." And he (Elisha) said unto him, "Go in peace." So he (Naaman) departed from him a little way.

What Naaman was asking the man of God was that when he would go into the house of his master's god, Rimmon, and when his master would lean on Naaman to bow down to Rimmon, which would make Naaman bow down as well, that the Lord God who just healed him of his leprosy would pardon him, that God would not hold this against him. Elisha then tells Naaman, Go in Peace!

Go knowing that God Almighty, the one who just healed you and made you clean of leprosy, would not hold this act against you! This gave Naaman the freedom to go home peacefully!

This same God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ makes available this same (pardon) of grace and mercy today! We must remember that Jesus Christ himself said in John 15:12-13, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. (13) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his

HEADLINES: PAGE 29

IN THE GROOVE with Cindy Annis

THE BEE GEES

Three brothers who were almost as successful as the Beatles and who defined disco music are the Bee Gees.

The Bee Gees are Barry Gibb, Maurice Gibb, and Robin Gibb. Barry was born on September 1, 1945 in Manchester England. On December 22, 1949 twins Maurice and Robin were born.

As kids, the brothers would perform at movie theatres before the films. Adults hated it, and the younger generation loved it. Back in the 50s, old people had the ideas that Rock 'n' Roll was the devil's music and would only lead to trouble. The Gibb brothers did cause trouble outside of their home. They would light fires around town. Having been caught by the police and told that they would need to attend reform school and possibly court, the family, with their new baby brother Andy moved to Australia in 1958.

In Australia, the boys started performing at racetracks in Brisbane. They would sing between competitions. A stadium official named Bill Goode sent a tape to a local disc jockey named Bill Gates. Bill was impressed with what he had heard and played their songs on the radio. Soon after being on the radio, the boys performed on television.

The musical act originally was just called B.G.'s. B.G.'s stands for Brothers Gibb. At the beginning of the 60s, B.G.'s became Bee Gees.

In 1966, the Bee Gees went back to England. Their father Hue Gibb, helped his sons out in the beginning by sending copies of their latest album to different record companies in England. Robert Stigwood who worked at NEMS Enterprise in London signed a recording contract with the boys. "New York Mining Disaster 1941 (Have You Seen My Wife, Mr. Jones)?" was the first song they released in the United States and Great Britain. The song was released to radio stations in the states without an artist credit. The song was played with the belief that the unknown group was the Beatles. When the unknown artist was made known as being the Bee Gees, people thought it was the Beatles recording under a different name. In May of 1967 the song went to #14 on the charts.

By 1969, the members were fighting with each other. They all went their separate ways. Robin started a solo career, recording "Saved by The Bell." Barry and Maurice started a television show called "Cucumber Castle. The show flopped. In 1969, Maurice Gibb married Lulu.

Fifteen months later, they got back together and recorded "How Can You Mend a Broken Heart". The song went to #1 in June of 1971. Originally the Bee Gees wanted Andy Williams to record the song, but Williams declined.

By 1973, Robert Stigwood moved the group from Atlantic Records to his own RSO record label. There, they were hooked up with a producer named Arif Mardin. He worked primarily with rhythm and blues artists. A career changing song came from Barry Gibb's car. One day, Barry was driving home from Criteria Studios in Miami when he went onto a bridge. He started to sing with the sound the car made on the bridge. "Jive Talkin" was born. The song went to #1 in May of 1975.

As time went on, the Bees Gees kept having hit songs and albums. They were given a project by Robert Stigwood. He needed songs for a movie called "Saturday Night Fever. They wrote seven songs for the movie. One song, "If I Can't Have You" was sung by Yvonne Elliman. "More Than A Woman" was originally supposed to be performed by Tavares. The producers didn't like the way Tavares performed the song so they used the Bee Gees original version instead. The album sold twenty-five million copies.

The Bee Gees ended the seventies with the song "Too Much Heaven" The song went to #1. All of the proceeds from the song went to UNICEF.

Tune into Cindy's Vinyl Vault all this month for our featured Artist of the Month. We go live Sunday night at 10pm til midnight, Monday night 11pm til midnight, and Wednesday night 9pm til 11pm on AM 980 WCAP. During every show, you are invited to call in a request or dedication at 978-454-4980. Join our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cindysvinylvault. There, you'll be able to listen to past shows commercial free. If you would like to send us an email our address is cindysvinylvault@gmail.com. So until next month, remember it's not how old it is, it's how great it sounds.

Cindy's Vinyl Vault is a live radio show on AM 980 WCAP. The Hosts are Cindy & Peter. We spin records from the 1950's, 1960's, and 1970's.

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"OREO COOKIE": FROM PAGE 11

received $1500 from LIUNA Local 174. During her 2014 State Senate campaign, L'Italien criticized her opponent for raising questions about back taxes she owed. As with DiZoglio, voters should demand L'Italien applies the same standard to her political allies as to her opponents. If raising questions about tax records is off-limits, attacking a Hispanic mayor for being an 'Oreo' should not only be off-limits, but cause outrage."

"Local democrats have a clear choice between siding with a powerful labor boss and his slurs, or having the courage to condemn hate speech and divisive rhetoric. Gagliardi's racial hate speech is a sad chapter in local politics." said Andrew Goodrich, President of Jobs First IE PAC.

OFFICIALS RESPOND, KIND OF ...

Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera would not comment on the matter. State Senator Barbara L'Italien also would not condemn Gagaliardi's statements, but rather issued a benign, general statement on the matter.

"I find it unfortunate and regrettable whenever anyone uses racially-charged rhetoric to make their argument," L'Italien said.

But some officials in Lawrence were more courageous. Lawrence City Councilor Marc Laplante said that the entire recall attempt was a "distraction".

"While I believe Mayor Rivera is doing a good job, those who disagree will have a chance to express themselves in the 2017 mayoral election. In the meantime, I am not surprised by the outlandish allegations designed to startle and garner attention."

Only one official contacted by The Valley Patriot, Lawrence School Committee Member Myra Ortiz, condemned Gagliardi's comments outright saying Gagliardi was "race baiting".

"It's inflammatory and doesn't represent anything but race baiting. Name calling is for the school yard and has no place in democratic process in which the labor union claims to be taking part of."

BACKGROUND

Mayor Dan Rivera is in his second year of a four-year term after defeating incumbent mayor Willie Lantigua by 84 votes in 2013. Lantigua threatened to organize a recall against Rivera after losing in 2013. Most of those organizing the recall against Rivera are former supporters of Lantigua, including Louis Farrah of the Farrah Funeral Home.

Gagliardi, who supported Mayor Lantigua, (and who steered thousand of dollars in union donations to Lantigua's campaign against Rivera in 2013) said that the recall is not about Lantigua or his support for the former mayor but, Rivera's refusal to support the Dominicans in Lawrence, adding the charge of sexism to his long list of complaints against Mayor Rivera.

"He can say this is about Lantigua, Lantigua's not even in the country. Danny has to say that because he has nothing

else to say. He's trying to hide from his record. All we expected from Rivera was for working families to be given a decent chance."

Attorney Sal Tabit (of Broadhurst and Tabit) represents Mayor Rivera in the legal process of the recall efforts. He told The Valley Patriot that he is confident that the recall of Rivera will fail, adding that he did not want to comment on the accusations Gagliardi made against Rivera.

"I represent the mayor on the legal process, so I am not in a position to address the political underpinnings of the recall effort," Tabit said.

"What we do know is that a judge issued a ruling from the bench declaring that any and all petitions dated 9-15-15 are null and void. She wants to maintain status quo and said that no further action on the recall should take place until such time as she has had a chance to rule."

Asked what ruling they were waiting for, Tabit said that they requested the Board of Registrars hold a hearing on Mayor Rivera's claims that some of the signatures obtained on the recall affidavit were invalid. "The BOR says we are not entitled to a hearing I think we need to wait and see what a judge says."

Tabit is no stranger to recall efforts in Lawrence. He represented Willie Lantigua in the recount and recall efforts against him. Tabit says he is flattered that Mayor Rivera hired him despite being on the other side in previous elections.

GAGLIARDI DOUBLES DOWN

"I challenge Andrew Goodrich to come spend some time in Lawrence and create jobs in law for the Dominicans who have been disenfranchised. "Get out of your ivory tower and bring hope to the city of Lawrence," he said.

Gagliardi said that he did not see his comments as racist and again turned the issue back to Mayor Rivera. "No, my comments were not meant to be racist comments at all. We are reiterating voices we hear in the community and Dan Rivera has turned his back on the people of Lawrence.

"My comments were not intended to be racist, it's a reflection of the truth on how Dan Rivera has turned his back on the Latinos in Lawrence. Instead of uplifting them he is trying to posture himself to run for congress. He is doing it at the expense of disenfranchising Dominicans."

DOOMED: FROM PAGE 12

intelligent people who will listen to your concerns and try to legislate fairly. For the District Council races I recommend Myra Ortiz (A), Estela Reyes (B), Kendrys Vasquez (C), Jeovanny Rodriguez (D), David Abdoo (E), and Marc Laplante (F).

Open Meeting Law (OML) Developments

As reported in the September issue, in a response dated August 14th, the Attorney General's office ruled that the City Council violated the OML in January in response to a complaint filed by this writer. They were found to have improperly gone into executive session and were not being specific enough in describing the item on the agenda and before the executive session. I've been waiting since January for the council to deal with this at a public meeting.

By accident I found out that Maldonado brought the matter up at the very end of the September 15th council meeting, long after I left. Needless to say, it was not on the agenda, bringing up yet another potential violation of the OML.

Immediately before adjourning, Maldonado gives an "Oh, I'm sorry, there was a matter," and directs Council's attention to a bulging envelope containing information from the Attorney General. He goes on to say that there was an executive session, he couldn't remember when but thought July. He stated that "somebody" filed a complaint saying there wasn't enough information given and the Attorney General agreed with them. He alluded to the article in the "Patriot Valley" and directed the Councilors to read the material from the Attorney General.

Well, I guess the case is closed as far as the Council is concerned. Unfortunately the under-described item is still sitting on the agenda as a tabled item. There will be more to come on the OML next month.

Is Lawrence the city of the doomed? You will decide that question on November 3rd. Please vote.

TEEN: FROM PAGE 26

It is not immigration that has ruined our country, nor is it welfare, drugs, or weak government leaders. The problem is that babies are having babies. People who can barely support themselves are becoming responsible for other human beings before ensuring a means to provide for the precious life they have created, whether "by accident" or by will. The solution is NOT abortion, and neither is it to raise that child under unlivable conditions. But it definitely starts with making the right choices and thinking about the consequences before you follow through.

Rule of thumb: If you wouldn't be able to handle the worst-case scenario, the best-case scenario isn't worth the risk.

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HEADLINES: FROM PAGE 27

life for his friends." Ephesians tells us in Chapter 5: 1-2, "be ye followers of God, as dear children; (2) And walk in love, as Christ also hath love us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."

As Christians we can never do harm to one another by loving one another. But the god of this world would much rather that we argue and fight with one another and take our eyes off of Jesus and place it on issues that divide us rather than unite us in love.

After Jesus Christ said on the cross, "It is Finished" God unleashed upon all of us His Grace and His Mercy!

Let's walk in Love toward one another and not take our eyes off of Jesus!

Peter Larocque

BABIES:FROM PAGE 26

to explain the reasons why a divorce is happening.

DO NOT FIGHT WITH YOUR EX IN FRONT OF THE KIDS. This is an overlooked item. I always was able to grasp this concept early on but some other just can't figure it out. All fighting in front of the kids does is confuse them and bring to light issues that are for adults only. Be smart and hold your tongue or find a way to communicate with your ex the right way via private phone call or conversation when the children are not within an earshot of distance.

Divorce is never easy on anyone, especially children. Working through your own issues of divorce as an adult is the best way to ensure your children an easier time in coping with their new lives.

RESULTS: FROM PAGE 12

The final results were:

Myra Ortiz 210

Sandy Almonte 103

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT "B"

In the District B Section of Lawrence, third term incumbent City Councilor Estella Reyes outpaced third time candidate Ruth Rojas. Reyes garnered 492 votes defeating Rojas, who only had 147 votes. Both candidates will advance to the November final. "The message is still the same [for me]. I'm here for my community, I work for them and I am always going to be open to them. They know every single time they call me I'm always there for them." Ruth Rojas could not be found on Election Day for comment.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT "C"

In District C, the Broadway and Arlington Neighborhoods, incumbent Kendrys Vasquez had a slightly tighter race, outpacing newcomer Arlene Garcia by 127 votes.

Kendrys Vasquez 342

Arlene Garcia's 215

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT "D"

District D includes the Tower Hill area of Lawrence and portions of the Arlington Neighborhood. Incumbent District Councilor Onaida Aquino is not seeking reelection. This was the tightest race in the city with two newcomers; School Committeeman Jeovanny Rodriguez had 300 votes to Linett Perez's 293 votes for a difference of seven votes. Both will advance to the final.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT "E"

District E is the South Lawrence West section of Lawrence. The incumbent City Councilor Eileen Bernal resigned last month to take a job in the Mayor's Office as his new chief of staff. She was not replaced. Former Lawrence City Councilor Dave Abdoo, who also has the distinction of challenging Willie Lantigua for Mayor in 2009, handily defeated Frederick Diaz a former member of Lantigua's staff. Abdoo had 598 votes to Diaz's 174 votes for a difference of 424 votes. Both will advance to the final.

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT F

Incumbent Lawrence City Councilor Marc Laplante garnered nearly 80% of the vote in the South Lawrence East section of Lawrence. Laplante defeated newcomer Robert Flete, 303 votes to 75 votes. Both will advance to the final election in November.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE DIST. "A"

On Prospect Hill, Myra Ortiz is leaving the school committee to run for city council. There was no candidate to replace her.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE DIST. "B"

There were no candidates in this race.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE DIST. "C"

Incumbent Pavel Payano was challenged by former Lawrence School Teacher Amy Berard. Payano garnered 349 votes to Berard's 127 for a difference of 222 votes. Both will advance to the final.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE DIST. "D"

There were no candidates in this race.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE DIST. "E"

Incumbent Patricia Mariano, a former teacher and principal in the Lawrence Public Schools, had 636 votes to challanger Homayoun Maali's 79 votes. Both will advance to the final.

GR.LAWRENCE TECHNICAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

There are three Lawrence representatives on the Greater Lawrence Technical School Committee. All three incumbents won nominations and will be reelected in November. Angel Garcia 2,091. Leo Lamontagne 164. Gary Mannion 1508

The band "Leaving Eden" appeared at the VFW in Salem, NH last month for a Veterans Benefit Concert.

Bruce Blood Playground Court at YMCA Renovated

The basketball court at Methuen's Bruce Blood playground has undergone a facelift. Thanks to donations of paint and labor from Sport Court New England, the once cracked and faded surface now shines in a bright red and green.

The court is located on the grounds of the Methuen YMCA at 129 Haverhill Street in Methuen. Andover-based Sport Court New England, owned by Jim Arnold, offered its services at no cost to the city to benefit those youngsters who use the court.

"It is such a wonderful thing when a private business steps forward to improve the quality of life in our city," says Mayor Steve Zanni. "I truly appreciate the generosity of Jim Arnold and his colleagues at Sport Court New England, who did an amazing job bringing this much-needed court back to vibrant life."

Arnold, a former resident of Methuen who established the popular Hoops for Hope program in the area, believes that a partnership between business and community is essential. He states, "It's great to see this court at the YMCA. Hoops for Hope and Sport Court New England worked Labor Day weekend to make this upgrade gift happen.

Special thanks to John Molori in the Mayor's Office, Recreation Director Bill Pare, and Anne Whalen and Dave Riccio at the YMCA for bringing it all together." Please contact the Mayor's Office at 978-983-8505 for more information.

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able to unseat Dan Grayton ... and can Sharon Birchall somehow inch her way into the top three? Most insiders expect Kannan to reclaim her seat and Jajuga to top the ticket, meaning that Sean Fountain, Dan Grayton and Sharon Birchall are really fighting for that remaining open seat in the at-large race. Choose WISELY!

EAST END COUNCIL RACE, VOTE FOR TWO - In the East End, incumbents Tom Ciulla and Ron Marsan are both running for re-election. Marsan is president of the City Council and is seeking his third term on the council. Ciulla is also seeking his third term. Challenging the two incumbents are Ryan DiZoglio and Christopher J. Lefebvre. We have not heard from either of the two challengers nor have we bumped into them on the campaign trail.

CENTRAL DIST. COUNCIL RACE, VOTE FOR TWO - This year there isn't one. The people of the Central District are so disengaged that not one person bothered to challenge the two incumbent city councilors in the Central District. Don't get me wrong, I have no problem with either Jamie Atkinson or Lisa Ferry (the two incumbents), but I hate it when any elected official goes unchallenged. Surely there is at least one person in the central part of Methuen who thinks they can do a better job than the current councilors. Yet, nobody cares enough put their name on the ballot and make these candidates actually work for their seat on the council. Sad. Very sad. You should all be ashamed of yourselves in the Central District.

WEST DISTRICT COUNCILOR, VOTE FOR TWO - This is expected to be the other close race and I say the race to watch. With incumbent West District Councilor Sean Fountain running at-large, George Kazanjian is the only incumbent in this race. Kazanjian is seeking his third term on the city council. He has been fiscally conservative as a councilor (an accountant by trade) and voted against the funding plan to put in new turf and a new clubhouse at the high school. Also seeking one of the two open spots in the West End are Former Councilor Ken Willette and newcomer Lynn Vidler. Willette is a former member of the school committee and a former councilor. He is also a former legislative aid at the state house and touts himself as fiscally conservative bragging that he never voted for a tax hike in Methuen. He is also a frequent contributor to The Valley Patriot. Lynn Vidler is a parent with children in the Methuen schools and was on the forefront of the fight for new turf and facilities at Methuen High School.

NOTEBOOK CONTINUED

Conventional wisdom says that Kazanjian and Willette will most likely take the two open spots in the West End, but with Kazanjian being the only candidate in this race who opposed the borrowing measure for the high school field renovations, if the parents and sports activists vote in higher numbers Kazanjian could find himself the odd man out on November 3rd.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE, VOTE FOR SIX

There are eight candidates fighting for six seats on the school committee. Five of the six incumbents are seeking reelection. Mary Jean Fawcett is not seeking another term meaning at least one new school board member will be elected.

The incumbents seeking re-election are: DJ Deeb, Bryan Sweet, Jana DiNitale (who was appointed to fill a vacancy), Lynn Kuum, and Robert Vogler. Challenging the incumbents are; Joyce Campagnone, Barbara Grondine, and Nick DiZoglio. Joyce Campagone is a current member of the city council but cannot run for re-election because of term limits. Barbara Grondine is a member of the Greater Lawrence Technical School Committee and is also seeking re-election to that post. Nick DiZoglio is a newcomer and a graduate of Methuen High School, with a great political family name and the support of many political insiders, DiZoglio seems to be working harder than most of the other candidates. He also has the endorsement of former Mayor Bill Manzi. DJ Deeb is a frequent contributor to The Valley Patriot and a former school committee member in Dracut, has written a book on the Middle East and is very fiscally conservative. Jana Dinitale is seeking her first elected term even though she is running as an incumbent. Dinatale was appointed to fill a vacancy when Rick Beshara resigned his seat.

HAVERHILL, ENHANCED BUS SERVICE - The enhanced bus service that was approved in the spring started on September 8th. This service change enhances the weekday bus service from 90 minutes to every 60 minutes. Mayor Fiorentini also had previously approved Sunday bus service, which is currently available to residents. There is no change of service to the weekends due to the enhanced weekday service. The MVRTA runs 5 routes serviced by 4 buses. They service Haverhill and 13 other communities in the Merrimack Valley. They operate Monday through Friday from 6AM until 6PM. The Saturday and Sunday service runs from 8AM until 6PM. The MVRTA also runs 16 vans for all of their communities for the elderly and disabled with a one-day advance notice. Please visit their website at www.mvrta.com for details.

METHUEN MUSIC HALL PERFORMANCE - On Friday, October 23 at 8:00 pm, the Methuen Memorial Music Hall presents the organist Christopher Houlihan in concert. The program includes works by JS Bach, Brahms, Vierne and Henry Martin; complete details are below. General admission is $20 ($5 for children) at the door. Methuen Memorial Music Hall is located at 192 Broadway (Route 28) in Methuen, MA, 30 miles north of Boston on the New Hampshire border.

Houlihan's performance in Methuen is the sixth annual Berj Zamkochian Memorial Organ Recital, honoring the internationally renowned Armenian-American who was organist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and founder of the Gomidas Organ Fund.

SCAVENGER HUNT TO BENEFIT THE BUTTONWOODS MUSEUM

It's time for our Annual Haverhill History Mystery. TEAM: Your party of 4 - 8 people will be driven to solve the clues they're given as they find their way around the town. You'll have a blast from the past, the perfect way to celebrate Haverhill's 375th anniversary! So double-dare your family, friends, neighbors, the in-laws, the outlaws, and your third cousin-twice-removed to join in the fun. Register early to assure your team's reservation. An extra point clue will be given to your team upon payment - the sooner you pay, the sooner you get your clue!

DATE: Saturday, November 14, 2015

TIME and PLACE: The car line-up begins at the Lower Level of the Merrimack Street Parking deck promptly at 5:00 PM

Departure is at 6:00 PM (Note: earlier start time)

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SPOTLIGHT PLAYHOUSE HOLIDAY RADIO SHOW AUDITIONS

October 12 @ 6:30-8:30pm. Spotlight Playhouse Presents "The Man Who Came to Dinner" Spotlight Playhouse Announces Auditions for The gift of the Magi, and The Visit of St. Nick, 2015 Holiday Radio Show. October 13th 7-9pm. WHERE: Spotlight Playhouse 24 Essex St 2nd floor, Haverhill, MA. Auditions will consist of cold readings from the script. Singers are asked to prepare to sing "Baby It's Cold Outside" and "Bye-bye Blackbird". Spotlight is looking to fill a cast with characters of all ages, children and adults. Two roles require accents, one Irish and one French. The cast includes a male and female soloist/duet who can sing old time holiday favorites including "Baby It's Cold Outside, "Bye-bye Black Bird, and "Ol' St. Nicholas". They are also looking for a primary sound effects operator. Performances will be the first two weekends in December. Rehearsals begin right after casting in October and are held primarily two nights per week until tech week. Questions? Contact the director at 978-697-6452.

LAWRENCE - NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION AWARENESS FAIR - Date: October 24, 2015. Time: 9:30 AM till 12:30 PM

Location: Lawrence Senior Center, 155 Haverhill Street

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Fitzpatrick Sworn In As Lawrence Police Chief

Acting Lawrence Police Chief Jim Fitzpatrick was sworn in as permanent chief by Mayor Dan Rivera last month at the Fire Fighters Relief In.

Chief Fitzpatrick told The Valley Patriot in a live internet broadcast of the event that his first plan of attack to handle crime in Lawrence was to work with the community. "I think we're going to rely on the community, community engagement, working on their priorities and that's where were going to get our guidance from."

Asked if the chief had a plan to to focus on the crimes that are going up in Lawrence while keeping the momentum of the crime that is going down, he said his focus will be on property crimes.

"First and foremost we are going to focus on those areas where there is a lot of property crime in the smaller neighborhoods. Some of the neighborhoods that don't have strong community size, the plan is to get into those neighborhoods and try to build some community partnerships with not only themselves, but with the Lawrence Police Department to ensure that they trust that we can provide the services if they need them."

Asked about Methuen's regular use of Narcan and Lawrence's failure to do so, the chief said he is applying for a Grant but had some reservations.

"We are exploring right now. We are applying for a grant for Narcan but my trepidation with that was, that they were only going to provide materials and not training for the officers, which I think is most important. These offices are tasked with many things that they are responsible for. So, I think that is important to make sure that they are fully trained on how to use it before we give it to them."

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BOOK REVIEW BY SUE PIAZZA

"THE OTHER WOMAN" by Hank Phillippi Ryan © 2012

Published by Tom Doherty Associates, LLC

Hardcover: 413 pages

Genre: Crime Mystery

4.5 out of 5 Bookmarkers

Website: www.hankphillippiryan.com

Good summer reading. Light and entertaining despite the book being a crime mystery. The only problem is if you read this at the beach put on plenty of sunscreen because you will loose track of time! The book is hard to put down.

Political intrigue, murder, lawsuits. Yes, we've heard it all before but what makes this book different is that it was written by Boston's TV personality and investigative reporter Hank Phillippi Ryan.

A consummate pro, Hank has over twenty-seven Emmy's and ten Edward R. Murrow Awards for reporting. She is a bestselling author of four mystery novels and the winner of the Agatha, Anthony, and Macavity awards.

Like any good crime mystery this story opens with a murder. Detective Jake Brogan investigates the murders of unidentified women found near bridges. Some suspect a serial killer.

TV reporter Jane Ryland is fired from her job. Not revealing her source in a high profile case lands her and the station she works for in an expensive lawsuit. The case is lost when she refuses to reveal her source.

A nebulous relationship exists between Brogan and Ryland. It is Det. Brogan's call that helps her land another job, this one in print.

The former Governor is running for a hotly contested upcoming senatorial race. Relegated to getting an interview with the noticeably absent wife, Ryland turns the piece into something no one expected. This twist drives the book.

People are not who they claim to be. We can see the threads of the mystery unfold. Some of it obvious to the reader, some not. Is the politician leading a double life? Is there an other woman?

Connections between the detective's murders and the reporter's political intrigue must be unraveled before the election. Time is of the essence.

The book is set against the backdrop of Boston with beautifully detailed descriptions of the city (e.g. Brookline's yellow maple trees, neon green from the Boston Garden billboards, purple beacons decorating the white-cabled Zakim Bridge).

Her descriptions are poetic. "A body by the river. This time, the Charles, down by the old dock. Her legs, black tights striped with mud, leather boots, one zipper down, splayed on the fallen leaves and slimy underbrush on the bank. Her head, chestnut hair floating like a punk Ophelia, bobbing and grotesque in the tangled weeds." Pure gold.

The short clipped sentences and small compact chapters made for a fast read. I read this book in a day and a half (had to sleep at night or I would've finished sooner). I would recommend this book. Worth the time.

SALISBURY: FROM PAGE 21

of that project was $18M and they have documentation to back it up from the EPA, the USDA, and the state that it was 100% funded by grants. All the sisters want is for an elected official to look at the documents ... all of them … and hold people accountable if there was any wrongdoing.

They want this because not only did they lose their business and their home over the issue, but when they try to speak at public participation on the matter, the bullies on the board shout them down, talk over them, and violate their first amendment right of free speech.

Surely a "nice guy" like Chuck Takesian has to admit that, like them or not, the Tomaselli sisters deserve to be treated ... nicely ... with respect ... regardless of what message they are trying to convey.

Yet, at Takesian's second meeting he allowed the Tomasellis to be insulted, humiliated, and shouted down right before his eyes and said nothing at all to object.

That's not very nice.

He didn't even say anything when Freeman Condon threatened to have Gracemarie Tomaselli removed from a public meeting for exercising her first amendment right of free speech.

CHUCK TO THE RESCUE?

At the August meeting of Salisbury Citizens for Change, nice guy Chuck Takesian stood before hundreds of Salisbury Beach residents and made yet another claim. At that meeting he declared for the first time that the 1989 constructed project was $30M, with $7.8M being the local share, or the amount to be paid by the rate payers of Salisbury.

He continued to deny that the project was $80M and continued to express bewilderment that anyone could come up with such a number.

Yet, Chuck, even on the night of that meeting, still had not bothered to read the documents given to him by the Tomaselli sisters.

He did say, however that he agreed with Salisbury Citizens for Change and the Tomaselli sisters, that the way Salisbury charges for Sewer user fees must be changed to be based on actual water usage. He also reiterated his commitment to fighting for fairness for all Salisbury residents.

I have faith in nice guys. I've been friends with former Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan for years. He's a nice guy too. And the one thing I know for sure about "nice guys" in politics is that at the end of the day, no matter how much they don't WANT to see the truth for fear of having to do something "NOT NICE", once they see it, their conscience won't let them look away anymore.

I have faith in you Chuck... show the people of Salisbury what you are made of, you have nothing to lose. If the Tomaselli sisters are wrong you will be the one to prove it and will be applauded by your colleagues on the board, they may even make you chairman.

If, however, the Tomaselli sisters are right, you will be the only Selectman in the last 30 years to have done the research, advocated for the voters (instead of the insiders) and let the chips fall where they may. Even if that means those chips fall on the heads of Neil Harrington, Freeman Condon and town counsel.

Whatever the truth is, isn't it nicer to have the public see it in the light of day, instead of having everything swept under the rug, and members of the public shouted down at public meetings?

Tom Duggan is publisher of The Valley Patriot, a former Lawrence School Committeeman, author of "Fighting Spirit", and hosts the Paying Attention! Radio Program every Sat. from 10am-noon. You can email your comments to valleypatriot@aol.com .

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